No. 782
Friday
Dec. '91

PRIVATE EYE

80p

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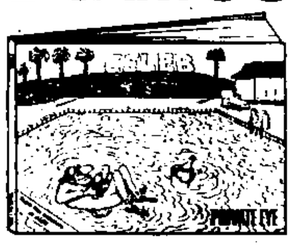

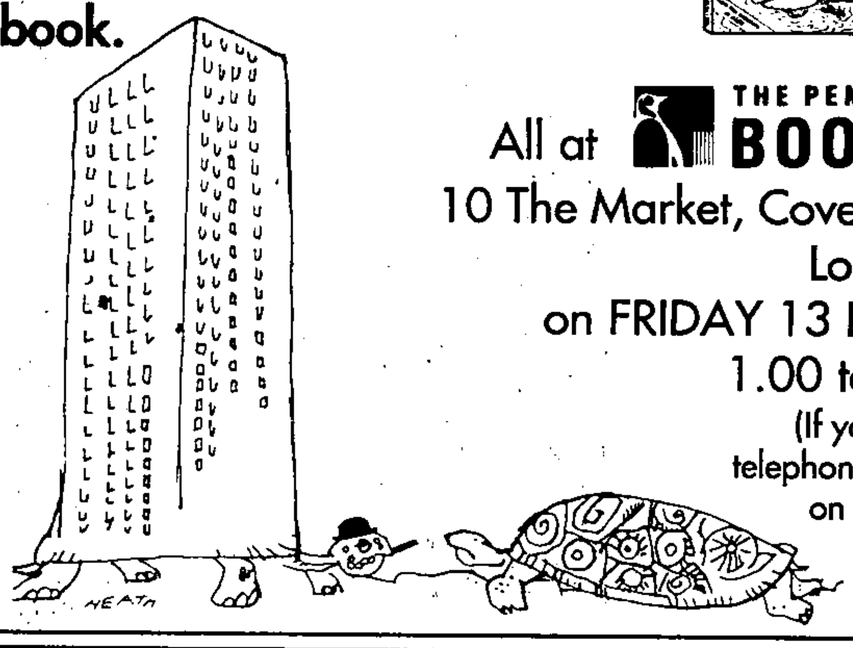

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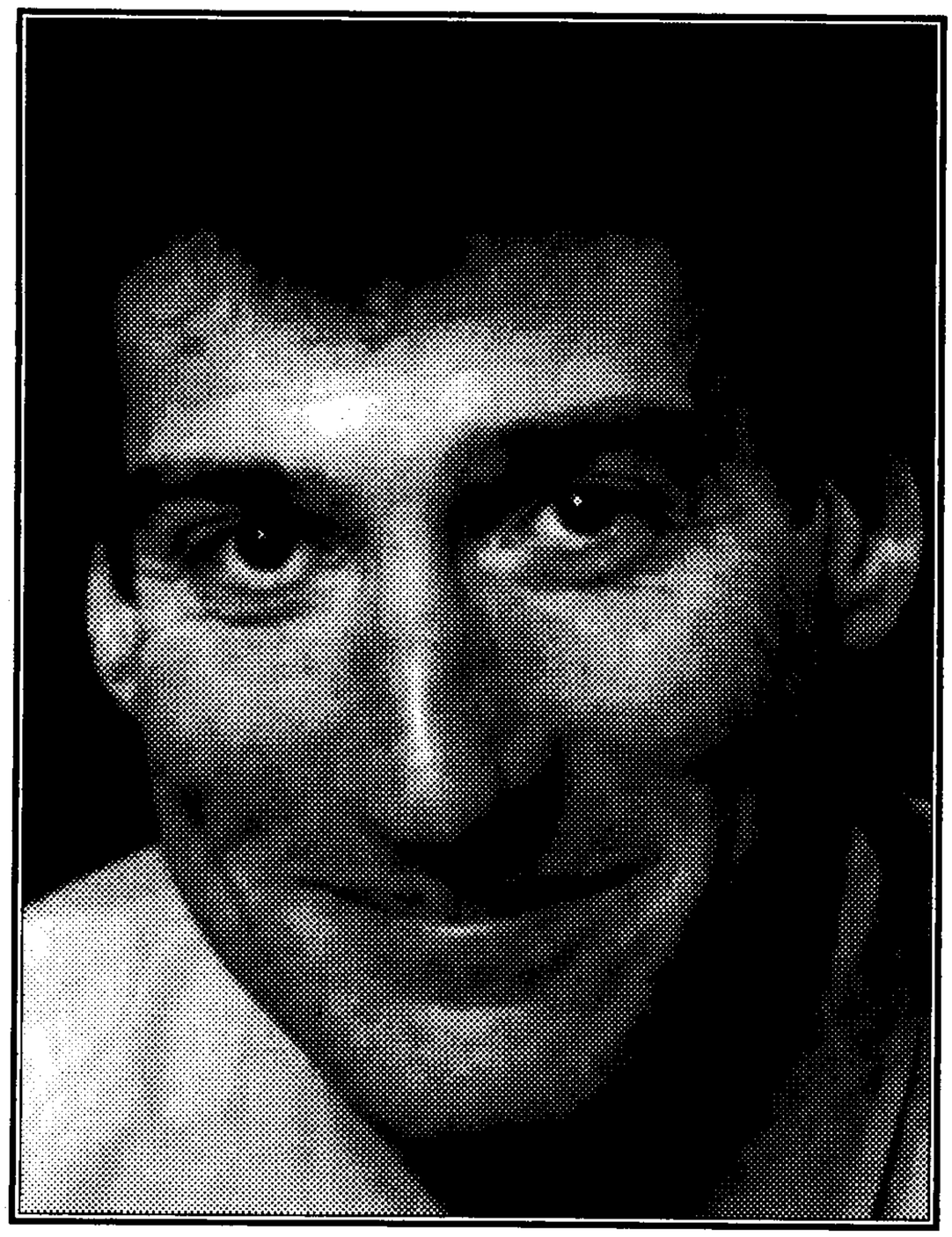

Jeremy Paxman

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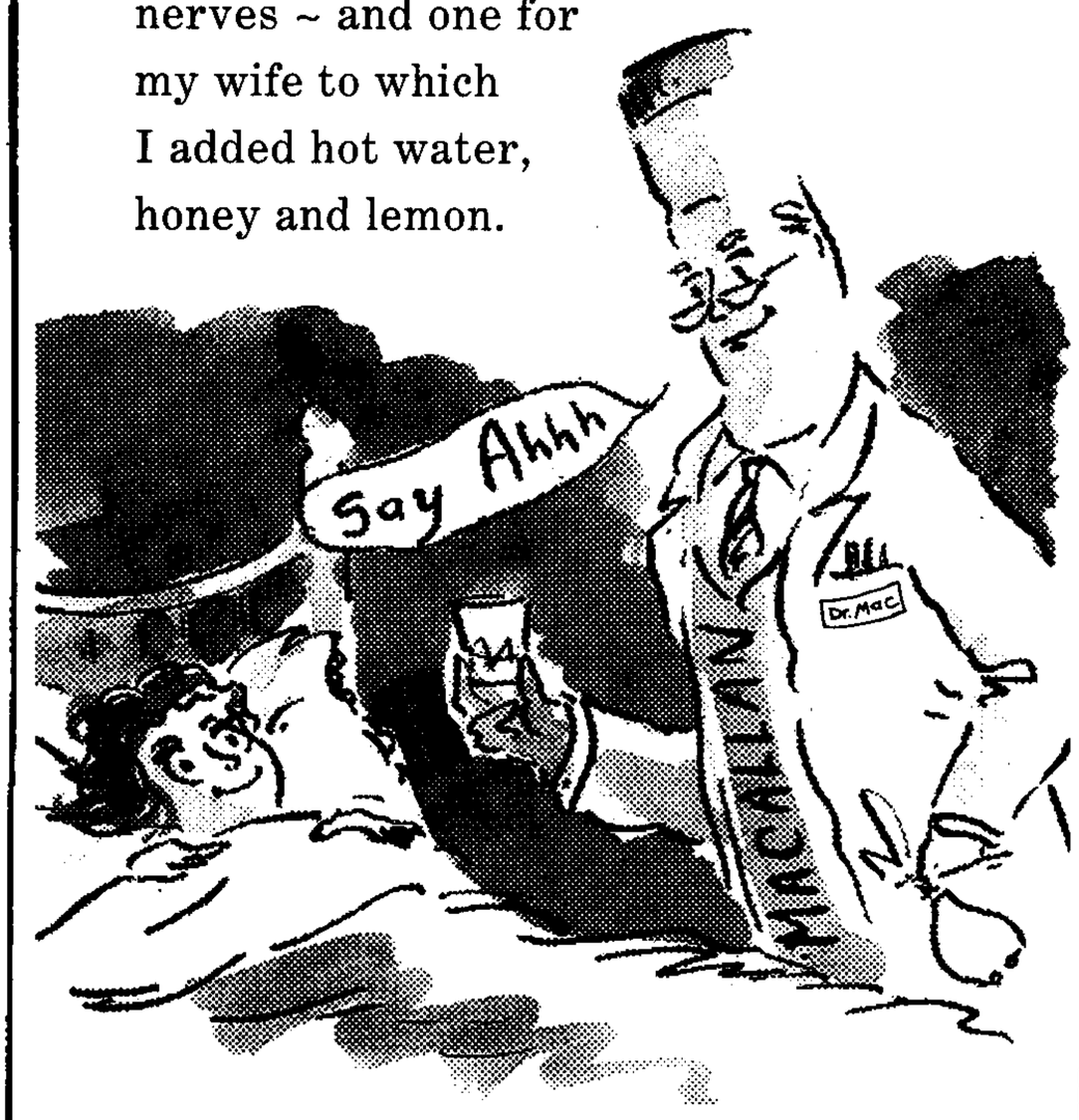
ATCHOO!

LAST WINTER, my wife was suffering from a snuffly cold, and before she went to bed asked me to make her a recuperative hot whisky toddy.

IMAGINE MY HORROR when I discovered that the bottle of 'cooking whisky' we normally kept was empty and the only alternative was my precious *10 year old* The Macallan Malt Whisky.

STILL, she had asked me for a toddy and the sacrifice had to be made. I poured two large measures of the sherry-gold elixir ~ one for myself to steel my nerves ~ and one for my wife to which I added hot water, honey and lemon.



SHE SIPPED IT with relish, and appeared to my eyes considerably the better for it the next day.

BUT NOT A BIT OF IT. "No change," she said that evening. "But we mustn't be impatient. It's important with medicine to *finish the course.*"

We are Indebted for Remedial Correspondence to Mr R. K. Ellis of Gosport, Hants.

The Macallan. The Malt.

Gnomeway

A Notice to all our Customers

AFTER a great deal of painful consideration, I have decided that all Gnomeway stores will be open on the remaining Sundays before Christmas.

This decision was not taken lightly, but was the result of a genuine desire to offer Gnomeway customers the service that they need. And there can be no doubt that in the run-up to Christmas our shoppers *need* to have a Sunday trading facility.

Gnomeway has always respected the arguments about keeping Sunday special. It has always respected the views of the Trade Unions on Sunday staffing. It has always respected the rule of law that makes Sunday opening illegal.

However, there is something that overrides these social, religious and even legal imperatives.

And that is our duty to our shareholders *(shurely "customers"? E.S.).*

This is clearly the view of the Attorney General who, in a brave ruling, has decided not to prosecute Gnomeway for breaking the Law. This, if I may say so, is a very sensible move, a clear-headed and forward-looking response to the situation. As I said to him only last week, if Gnomeway were to face legal action, then they would be unable to allocate the normal £1 million per annum to the political party of their choice. Then that party would find itself extremely strapped for cash. It would, in fact, be so desperate that it might be forced to start having jumble sales, car boot auctions, and Bring 'n' Buys every Sunday from now until the election.

My argument, I am glad to say, prevailed. I have, therefore, with deep regret, but with a clear conscience, issued instructions for all Gnomeways to remain open on the next three Sundays. And the 52 after that.

E. Strobes
Lord Gnome
Gnomeway
Great-Ringing-on-the-Till
Humbug
Milton Friedman

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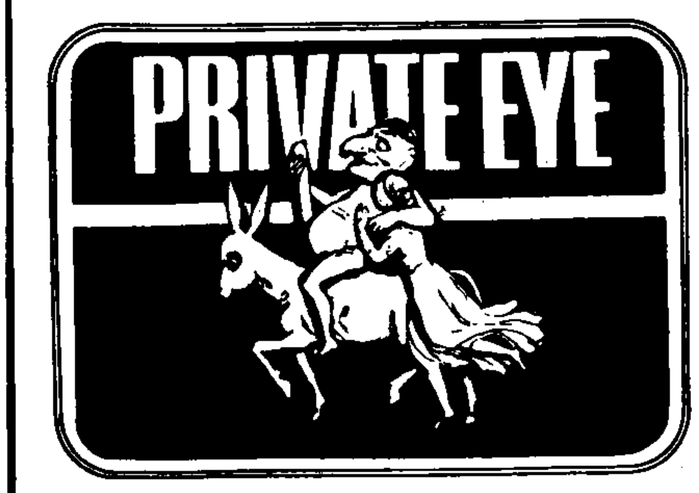


COLOUR SECTION

LORD Fraser of Carmyllie, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, is terribly cross with the *Eye* for daring to suggest that the recent announcement that two Libyans were solely responsible for the Lockerbie bombing is a lot of hypocritical balderdash.

"Some recent speculative pieces," he says (referring to the last *Eye* and a *Sunday Times* leader which dutifully followed the *Eye* line), "have come dismayingly close to impugning the integrity of the investigation."

Before we get even closer to that dreadful conclusion, Lord Fraser might like to answer one question: "Why is it that the suspects he now names are entirely different from the suspects whose names his government colleague, Paul Channon, leaked to the press at The Garrick Club a few months after Lockerbie?"

Before he answers, perhaps he should remember that the aforementioned Channon (after disclosing that the bomb had been made and planted by Syrians and Palestinians) went on to sing to the skies in praise of the "brilliant" police investigation in Galloway.

How could one brilliant investigation lead to entirely different suspects from the ones whom Lord Fraser portentously "demands" should be produced in his courts (in the certain knowledge that he will never get them there)?

PANIC is spreading through the Department of Trade and Industry over the "supergun" made in Britain for Saddam Hussein's Iraq during what was supposed to be a British government arms embargo.

The DTI has always insisted that two main British suppliers of the gun barrels — Walter Somers of Halesowen and Forgemasters of Sheffield — never had permission to export their deadly cargo. The firms, on the other hand, have always said they did indeed have permission from the Government to export the goods to Iraq and were terribly upset when some of the parts were seized by HM Customs.

Now a House of Commons report criticises the DTI without solving the apparent contradiction. The problem in the Commons was the same as that facing HM Customs when they were investigating the supergun saga: the real culprits were not those inside the DTI but the superbrains who run MI6, otherwise known as Her Majesty's Secret Service.

After the Iran-Iraq war, both the CIA and MI6 were keen to help Saddam Hussein, whom they had supported wholesale during the last years of the war (Saddam would never have survived without that support). Iraq, they realised, would be desperate to build up its shattered armed forces — and who better to profit from that than British and American arms dealers and arms firms?

Both intelligence services then "let it be known" that arms shipments to Iraq, whatever the formal legal position, were absolutely permissible. When Sir Hal Miller, Tory MP for Bromsgrove, made discreet inquiries about the supergun on behalf of Walter Somers, whose main factory was in his constituency, he approached MI6. He was told to tell Walter Somers, and Forgemasters, that there was absolutely nothing to worry about. The firms got on with it and the barrels were made — enough for at least one gun to get out to Iraq.

The second and third guns were foiled by Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, which has its agents in MI6. Mossad tipped off Customs and consignments of the barrels were seized. Customs duly prosecuted the companies, and the man originally in charge of the supergun project in Iraq, Dr Christopher Cowley. To their horror, the Customs men were then ordered to drop the prosecutions. As so often when the security services are responsible for unlawful conduct, they made sure that no one (least of all themselves) was punished for it.

CONGRATULATIONS to the *New Statesman* for studiously copying out the *Eye* revelations of recent years about the role in the Irangate scandal of the brothers Aspin.

This is only the second time anyone outside the *Eye* has dared to suggest that there was a substantial British connection to Irangate which, when finally exposed, could take the scandal to the place where it originated — the offices of George Bush.

The only other substantial mention of the Aspins was in the *Observer* on 28 July in a piece by Hugh O'Shaughnessy. It also referred to the embarrassing fact that the attempt by the Aspins to sell missiles to Iran to release American hostages there involved several numbered bank accounts in BCCI.

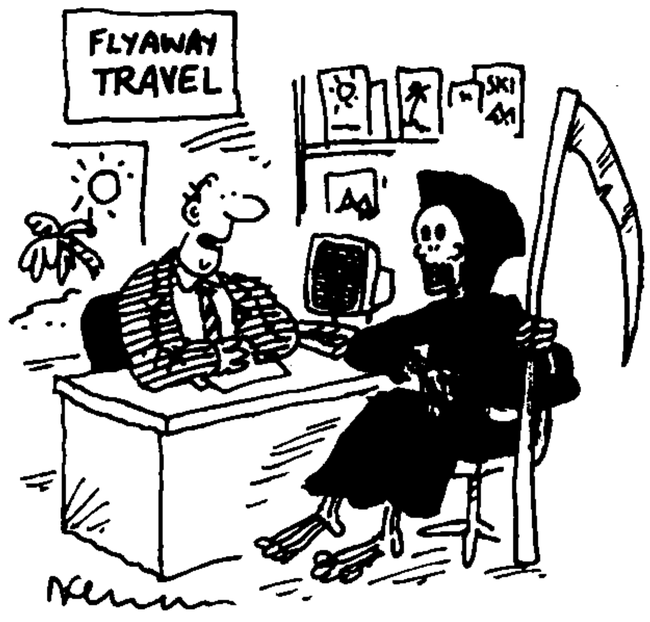
As he wanders round Britain, shepherded by HarperCollins, his publishers, wowing gullible audiences like the Cambridge Union and dazzling female interviewers, Oliver North is strangely silent on this matter. The name Aspin does not appear in his index and nor does BCCI.

These matters were widely discussed, however, in the 1988 trial of Michael Aspin and others who were eventually convicted of attempting to sell arms to Iran when no such arms existed. The wretched Aspin and his colleagues were simply sold down the river by the CIA and by North, who had found "more reliable channels" for selling their missiles.

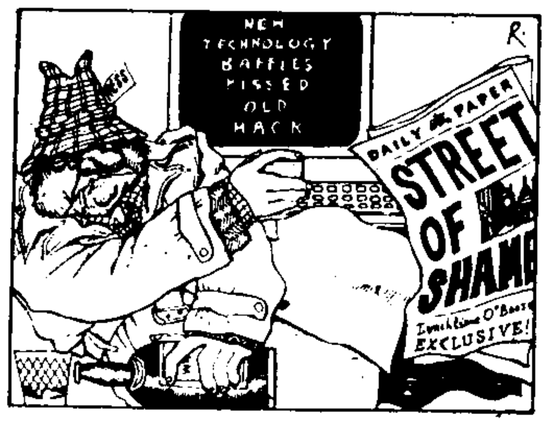
One crucial part of the prosecution case was the unequivocal statement of Ben Banerjee, an Iranian arms dealer based in Bedfordshire, that he had never entered into any agreement with the Aspin brothers. Banerjee (like Leslie Aspin) has since died; but the *Eye* has a copy of an agreement, dated 28 July 1984, for a shipment of arms in which the profits are to be shared equally between Banerjee's company, BR and W Industries, and the Aspins' company, Delta Investments of Norwich.

If this agreement had been produced at the trial, it would have knocked a big hole in the prosecution's insistence that the Aspins' claim to have been involved in an arms deal with Banerjee was fake. The agreement had been seized by police when they raided Michael Aspin's house in 1987. In the highest traditions of modern British prosecutions, it was never disclosed to the defence.

Give a *PRIVATE EYE* subscription for Christmas! And there's still time to buy the *EYE*'s own Christmas cards — details and order form on the back cover — but hurry!



"Yugoslavia's nice this time of year"



THE issue of *Community Care* magazine for 27 January 1983 carried an adulatory two-page profile of the officer-in-charge of the Beeches Family Centre, near Leicester. His name was Frank Beck.

Beck told the magazine that most residential institutions "put barriers between themselves and the young people" by imposing "petty rules and unnecessary regimentation on the children". At the Beeches, as *Community Care* revealed, it was quite different.

"The young people are obviously relaxed, unhampered by rigid rules, able to say what they feel like, but never disrespectful," its reporter, Nicholas Murray, observed admiringly. "He [Beck] believes in the importance of physical contact in which he sees as a touch-deprived society and staff are encouraged to cuddle children — something I saw happening repeatedly in a very natural and spontaneous way which the children obviously enjoyed."

Last week, Frank Beck was sent to prison for the rest of his life after being found guilty of numerous sexual and physical assaults on the children in his care. The trial heard that complaints had been made about him throughout the early 1980s and that in 1983 he was tried (and acquitted) of causing actual bodily harm on a boy in his care whom he had "chastised". Reporting last week's verdict, *Community Care* noted that "serious errors of judgement" were made by Leicestershire Social Services. Oddly, it neglected to mention its own well-judged contribution to Beck's career.

CAROL Thatcher's lofty attitude to her poll tax bill is not the only example of her reluctance to pay for anything.

A year ago, la Thatcher asked Malaysian Airlines for a "facility trip" (the usual euphemism for freebie) to Malaysia, explaining that, as a journalist, she wanted to write some articles about the place.

The airline duly obliged, offering her a business class ticket to Kuala Lumpur plus all the local flights she demanded — to Penang, Borneo, Singapore, etc. Even this was not enough for milady; she crossly insisted that she must fly first-class, and the airline gave in.

The idea of a deal such as this is that, in return for her ticket, the freeloading hackette will write a piece extolling the delights of holidays in the Far East and will mention that she flew there courtesy of Malaysian Airlines. So, after her return, the airline waited eagerly for her promised features.

In vain. The only piece she wrote about her trip was for the March 1991 issue of *High Life* — the in-flight magazine of British Airways! Naturally enough, Thatcher did not reveal anywhere in this article that her jaunt had been financed by a rival airline.

A spokeswoman for Malaysian Airlines admitted to the *Eye* this week that "we were a bit disappointed". She couldn't definitely confirm that Carol Thatcher had insisted on flying first-class throughout her trip — "but she didn't fly Economy, let's put it that way".

IN ITS JOB ads, the holier than thou *Grauniad* proudly trails itself as an "equal opportunities employer". So the newspaper naturally gave a warm welcome to John Major's recent launch of Opportunity 2000, the mission to give women a better chance of promotion at work.

"Only one in five of the 45,000 people on public bodies — from the Bank of England to the Registry of Friendly Societies — is a woman," the paper tut-tutted in a pious editorial. "Local government is even worse, with only five female executives out of 400. Company board rooms have 18 female directors among the 1,333 in the top 100 companies."

And how many women are to be found in the upper echelons at the *Guardian* itself?

The following key executives are men: editor, deputy editor, executive editor, managing editor, foreign editor, City editor, weekend magazine editor, home editor, news editor, sports editor, features editor, literary editor, chief sub-editor, pictures editor and the three principal leader-writers.

Women occupy the humbler posts of women's editor (surprise!), home affairs editor, assistant foreign editor, arts page editor, letters editor, and... er, that's it.

Having excoriated employers who don't give women top jobs, the *Grauniad* has now turned its censorious gaze on another problem: the dominance of Oxbridge graduates in senior civil service jobs. "What Sir Robin [Butler, the Cabinet Secretary] should have done is to have recruited some recent redbrick high-flyers with strong Brummie, Geordie or Mancunian accents and sent them out to sell the Civil Service," it pronounced in a recent editorial.

And what of the *Guardian* itself? Chock-a-block with redbrick high-flyers, presumably?

Er, no. The editor, deputy editor, executive editor, managing editor, City editor, features editor, the three principal leader-writers and most of the senior specialist writers all went to Oxbridge!

NICK "Rat Boy" Gordon, the little-known editor of *YOU Magazine*, was recently invited to a private meeting with Lord Rothermere to discuss his future editorial plans and no doubt reassure his proprietor that the extra millions of pounds invested in the magazine of late are being put to good use.

Before long, Rat Boy was embarrassed to notice that Rothermere had fallen asleep. He sat there gazing meekly at his employer, not certain whether to rouse him or to seek secretarial assistance or to discreetly to leave the room.

Eventually, after about ten minutes or so, Rothermere woke up and Gordon carried on where he had left off.

ON 23 November Neil Lyndon filled several pages of the *Spectator* with a diatribe against women — and, in particular, the party-going hackette Kate Saunders, whom he presented as one of the most fearsome threats to western civilisation.

Whence this disproportionate hostility? Surely it can have nothing to do with the fact that, earlier this year, la Saunders wrote a piece for the *Sunset Times* Style section about the universally unflattering reactions of readers to a pisspoor feature by Neil Lyndon in the *ST* magazine the previous week?

The DIRTY DIGGER
THE DIGGER COMPARES THE BRIGHT NEW 'TIMES' TYPEFACE WITH THE OLD---
OH YES! THIS IS MUCH BETTER!
THE TIMES
Dull News Yesterday
THE TIMES
Dull News Today
John Kent

ULSTER NEWS

THE media's inexhaustible enthusiasm for stunts rather than action in Ulster was once again on display when it was announced that extra troops were being drafted into Belfast.

In fact, virtually all the "extra" soldiers are already serving in the province and are simply being moved a few miles to new barracks.

The 500-odd members of the Gloucestershire Regiment who'll be spending an unplanned Christmas break in Ulster were actually stationed there last year, and will probably be brought home quietly in the new year. Having played the cavalry-to-the-rescue reinforcement card, senior army officers can then return to demanding the reintroduction of mass internment.

It was, of course, a form of internment — the use of lengthy remands in custody in the wake of the Stevens inquiry — which enabled younger, more aggressive loyalists to supplant the existing paramilitary leadership. A more extensive lifting of suspects in the future would probably have the same effect on both loyalists and republicans.

THOSE interested in justice in Northern Ireland are comparing the sentences handed down to Frank Beck, the child abuser in Leicestershire, to those handed down to three men involved in the Kincora scandal (see *Eyes passim*).

John McGrath, Joseph Mains and Raymond Semple were convicted in 1981 on specimen charges of consistent rape and buggery of boys in their care in the Kincora Boys Home, which was run in the 1960s and 1970s by Belfast Corporation.

The activities of the three Belfast men were every bit as revolting as Beck's.

Beck got a series of five concurrent life imprisonments and is likely to be in jail for at least twelve years. Mains got six years, Semple five and McGrath, who had committed by far the worst offences, four. All left prison quickly. McGrath served just under two years in jail.

The only substantial difference between the cases is that Beck does not seem to have been an agent for MI5, nor a leader of a fanatical paramilitary Protestant sect. McGrath was both.

LIBEL NEWS

THE use of the asinine libel laws to stifle dissent took a strange turn recently when a police officer won damages from a motorist who had criticised her in an official complaint.

WPC Jenny Robson accepted an out of court settlement of £500 and a written apology from the motorist, Nigel Flood, who also paid her legal costs, estimated at £4,000 or more.

Mr Flood, an office equipment salesman, was wheel-clamped by WPC Robson while making a delivery in Holborn, central London. Although his fine was refunded because the clamp should not have been applied, he wrote to the Metropolitan Central Traffic Ticket Office to complain about the WPC's attitude.

Complaints against the police are usually covered by "qualified privilege"; but this can be overcome if the complaint is found to be malicious — a technical term meaning roughly that is was "made without a reasonable belief that it was true". If it is found to be so, allegations made against a police officer may be actionable.

Mr Flood's problem was that he could not afford to have a jury hear the details of his complaint and decide whether it was malicious or not. WPC Robson was supported by the long arm (or deep pockets, anyway) of the Police Federation, so if she had lost, the federation would have footed the bill. Mr Flood had no such benefactor — all he had was a house to sell. Given that there were no independent witnesses to the original dispute, an impartial observer might think Mr Flood was left with very little choice.

But by an ingenious twist, the libel laws prevent Mr Flood or his solicitors from making this clear to anybody: if either of them suggest that Mr Flood was forced to agree to an out of court settlement for financial reasons, this detracts from the sincerity of his apology.

The most disturbing element in the whole affair is that WPC Robson is to be found on the front page of the police newspaper *The Job* urging other coppers to join her in bankrupting anyone who dares question the professionalism of London's boys and girls in blue.

WHEN John Major told the Commons that other European Community countries had accepted the idea of a federation but "we have never done so", the Prime Minister was not speaking for his Foreign Secretary.

Douglas Hurd is an out and out marketeer who, as a former diplomat, knows exactly what the EEC is about. He is also discretely adept at the diplomat's art of coded double-speak.

He served in the Rome embassy until 1966, then became head of the foreign section of the Tory Research Department and private secretary to Edward Heath, who was then leader of the opposition. When Heath became Prime Minister in 1970, Hurd was his political secretary. Back in opposition, he became Tory spokesman on European affairs when Labour was, as the Tories saw it, insufficiently enthusiastic about Europe.

The other European foreign ministers know they have no need to worry so long as Hurd is around to show Major how to appear tough when there is an election approaching — and then how to capitulate smoothly soon afterwards.

IS the Labour Party in favour of a European federation? Well, up to a point. Then again. Maybe. Er...

At a conference of community socialist parties in Luxembourg last June, Neil Kinnock recoiled in horror from the idea of creating a single European federal socialist party. It would have led to the federalising of his job — and Kinnocchio might not have been chosen as Windbag Numero Uno.

WHY does Kenneth Baker get all the flack at the Home Office rather than, say, Angela Rumbold, who's actually in charge of prisons?

Because Baker is hated not only by his colleagues but by lesser Home Office staff who keep leaking details of his cock-ups.

TALKING of staff disloyalty, the latest nickname for John Gummer among Ministry of Agriculture officials is "Cheetah". (This is not a reference to his honesty, but to the chimpanzee in *Daktari*.) John Redwood at the DTI is now known simply as "Hannibal The Cannibal".

MICHAEL HOWARD, the Government's joke Employment Secretary (see *Eyes passim*) is not the only top Tory to whizz round Britain on meaningless public relations jaunts. William Waldegrave, who drew the Cabinet booby prize — the National Health Service — is also at it.

Late last month he was due to spend one and a half hours looking round the Charlotte Keel Health Centre in Bristol. As the memo from the centre's manager made clear to doctors and other staff: "This is intended to be a 'social' visit (no embarrassing questions), but if people wish it to be otherwise, then questions and grievances to be raised will have to be sent to his office beforehand and vetted, and an advisor will also attend the visit."

Why should any Secretary of State for Health be "embarrassed" by questions about the NHS? If Mr Waldegrave's splendid Patients' Charter is a success, then no one who is suffering in pain will have ever have to wait for an operation again. Well, they won't have to wait more than two years, anyway.

POOR OLD William Waldegrave. His latest desperate ploy to keep good news for himself and to let Virginia Bottomley or Stephen Dorell announce the bad is backfiring. They are getting more appreciation with their tidings of woe than he is with the glad news.

THE LORD Plumb may sound like a very agreeable country pub, but it is in fact the name of the Tories' Euro MP for The Cotswolds. If you've never heard of him, it's probably because he was once president of the European Parliament.

Back home, the ruddy-faced farmer has recently written to members of Cherwell District Council beseeching them to support a planning application to build a hotel in Bloxham, deep in wildest Oxfordshire.

"As your MEP", he wrote, "I am most concerned that I find it increasingly difficult to promote the Cherwell area, which I regard as the natural gateway to the Cotswold area... the council now has a unique opportunity to stimulate development and create employment opportunities." Just in case any reader was still unsure of Plumb's line, the note ended: "I support the building of this hotel which, as far as I can judge having visited the site, causes no demonstrable harm to anyone."

Unfortunately, as environment-conscious local planning officers pointed out, not only did the development contravene the council's rural areas local plan, but Plumb clean forgot in his long and detailed missive to say that he was a director of a company in the same group as the developers, Midlands Mart. Oops.

SO apprehensive is the Conservative Party of Liberal Democrat muscle in a hung parliament that they are seeking a charismatic figure to topple Paddy Ashdown in his Yeovil constituency.

Top of the list? None other than Thatch's friend and now Major's — Jeffrey Archer. Surely not?

'Backbiter'

YOUR FAVOURITE TORIES ON TAPE

THE TAPE recordings of Conservative MPs Sir Peter Blaker and Robert Atkins plotting to smear Owen Oyston, the Preston-based socialist millionaire, make fascinating listening.

They prove that Oyston's recent high court libel victory over the *Sunday Times* was just one episode the long series of attempts to discredit him — and may well embarrass the Prime Minister: Robert Atkins, Sports Minister and member for South Ribble, is one of John Major's closest parliamentary chums.

Readers will recall that Preston-based insurance salesman Michael Murrin acted as the leg man for a coven of high Lancashire Tories who wanted to discredit Oyston (see *Eyes* 778 and 779). The coven included Blaker, the MP for Blackpool South; and Bill Harrison, a leading Preston Tory who put up the money for Murrin's "digging". The former Home Secretary, David (now Lord) Waddington, the MP for Ribble Valley, was kept informed of all Murrin's findings.

Murrin met Atkins and Blaker in Blaker's London flat to plot moves to destroy the business and reputation of Oyston. Both men may well now regret ever having met Murrin who, never wishing to rely entirely on his memory, taped an enormous number of calls.

Atkins told the *Eye* that over a longish period he had encouraged Murrin to go on digging into Oyston as he felt it was in the public interest. In fact Atkins went somewhat further. In one call to Murrin he said: "Between you and me, I have had a word with a colleague in the DTI who is responsible for the City and that [*sic*] they will put the boys in there [*Oyston's companies*] if there is any evidence. Anyway this man is supposed to be a socialist — so it wouldn't mind [*sic*], would it?"

When asked why he had done this, Atkins was not sure whether he had or had not. On other matters, however, he was more forthcoming. Asked if he had ever reported Oyston to anyone on the basis of Murrin's information, he said he was a regular conduit to the police "on an ad hoc basis".

He also disclosed that there were several sources of funding for Murrin and his inquiries into Oyston. When Murrin was asked to name them by the *Eye* he declined to do so.

Atkins's complaint was that "we are no further now than we were ten years ago" and that the "*Sunday Times* told me that we had him [Oyston] on toast".

His co-adventurer, Sir Peter Blaker, the retiring MP for Blackpool South, had commercial motives, according to Atkins.

"It was only when the cable thing came up was Peter involved in it," said Atkins — a reference, no doubt, to a local cable franchise which Blaker and Oyston fought over and Blaker lost.

Blaker was more to Murrin than merely a listening post: he was also an adviser. When Murrin went to the annual general meeting of the Royal Insurance Group in 1988, it was to ask about the takeover by Royal of Oyston Real Estate. Murrin was publishing a lengthy tome and sent it to Blaker for comment. The tape of this conversation is very interesting.

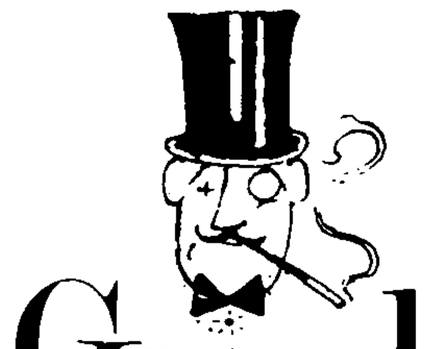
In it Blaker advises Murrin of style and content and tells him to break it down into readable bits, so that when he [Murrin] meets the "head man" [Waddington, then Home Secretary] he will not be bowled over by the size of it. Blaker also wanted to know if the first section "would cover all the juicy bits".

He also advised Murrin that when he was at the Royal Insurance meeting he should not attack the chairman or the board, but to stick to the deal on Oyston Real Estate. On another occasion, when Murrin was bragging that the Inland Revenue might take action against Oyston, Blaker said: "We don't want a settlement out of court."

The temperature of malice hotted up when the Murrin and Blaker discussed Oyston's alleged links to drugs and money laundering — highly damaging and unfounded accusations that even a simpleton could have checked and easily dismissed. As the men speculated on what Oyston might do, Murrin suggested that he might do a runner. Blaker replied: "Rio. Well, that would be a victory of sorts — but not such a good one, not such a good one, not the one we want. Put him behind bars."

As reported in the *Eye*, both Blaker and Atkins have said they would be happy to cooperate with any police inquiry. With the Murrin tapes now widely circulated, their wish may yet be granted.

Murrin, for his part, has told the *Eye* that all he ever wanted was for the truth to come out. He justifies surrendering the tapes of Atkins and Blaker, his former allies, on the grounds that they deserted him in his hour of need.



Grovel

NONE OF the hastily assembled profiles of Belinda Harley, who was recently appointed as Prince Charles's public relations adviser, did justice to her full and varied career.

Unmentioned, for example, was the fact that while serving as publicity director of Weidenfeld & Nicolson, she fell victim to one of Lord Popeye's legendary courtship techniques, known as "the Weidenfeld transfer." One night Ms Harley gave Lord Popeye a lift home in her car. When she pulled up at his house, he wrenched her nearest hand from the steering wheel and swiftly applied it to his unfurled organ.

Nor was any reference made to one particular "special relationship". While Belinda was acting as either PR rep or agent for various authors eager to sell serialisation rights to *The Sunday Times*, Brian MacArthur, the paper's then executive editor responsible for buying book excerpts, developed something of a *tendresse* for the doe-eyed, raven-haired temptress. Indeed, after a brief encounter, MacArthur decided to pursue Ms Harley's heart. She indicated, however, that her interest was confined to professional matters.

I do hope Prince Charles is not tempted to emulate either of these two gentlemen.

ANNABEL HESELTINE, the daughter of Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine, has been setting a poor example to her neighbours in Westbourne Park, west London.

Four fire engines turned out with sirens blaring when her upstairs neighbours were almost suffocated by smoke seeping into their kitchen. Their discomfiture was as nothing compared to that of Annabel herself when several firemen entered her living room and extinguished the log fire she was merrily burning in a smokeless zone.

Only a few days before, Annabel had been told by a council official that her parked car was overhanging the pavement. Her tart reply, in which she described the official as a "silly little council man", shows that she has at least got the hang of the Citizens' Charter.

● *AMBLING through London, I am almost knocked over by a crowd of pin-striped hoorays on a protest march. The Bruges Group (for it is they) are chanting abusive slogans about the Dutch city of Maastricht, which has for some reason excited their displeasure.*

Imagine my surprise when I notice that the preposterous figure at the head of this procession — who is carrying a wooden crate that is meant to symbolise a coffin or a ballot box, or possibly both — is my old friend the Hon Christopher Monckton, the legendary Viscount-to-be who is chief leader-writer for the London Evening Standard.

Many newspapers would take rather a dim view of their senior staff espousing a controversial cause so publicly, since it might be thought to compromise the editorial-writer's Olympian detachment. But Lord Rothermere — who is himself a 3rd Viscount, just as Christopher will be — is clearly a broad-minded employer.

MY OLD friend Sally-Ann Lasson, the famous "cartoonist", cat lover and royal adulteress, has had a last-minute fit of conscience, I hear, over a vulgar publicity stunt.

***YOU Magazine*, the *Mail on Sunday*'s colour supplement, wanted her to appear in its annual Hall of Fame feature. Last year's cover had the wretched royal Marina Ogilvy in a saucy, fetishistic costume. This year, *YOU* came up with the equally brilliant idea of having a photograph of the emaciated Sally-Ann wearing a cloak and standing on the prow of a Thames barge going through Traitor's Gate at the Tower of London.**

When approached over the telephone about merely being photographed, Sally-Ann's first concern, naturally, was to inquire about the proposed fee. Told that she would be paid £5,000, she readily agreed to go in to the *YOU* office to discuss the idea for the photo. When the scenario was outlined to her, she again indicated agreement. A few days later, however, she informed *YOU* that she was not interested after all. I wonder why?

"Don't let anyone open the doors for you"

● *I WAS MOST distressed to see that Dr John Casey, of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, has fallen victim to the odious plague of political correctness that has already made a mockery of American universities.*

Apparently students at Cambridge have taken offence at an article advocating repatriation of immigrants which Casey wrote back in the early 1980s and for which he has since publicly apologised. The university students' union has sought to discourage attendance at Casey's lectures by mounting its own competing series of lectures by left-wing academics, such as the Marxist English don from Oxford, Terry Eagleton — a greater punishment, to my mind.

I wonder how these earnest students would react if they knew that Casey was once fond of recommending Schopenhauer's essay "On Women" to male undergraduates. This argues that women are designed for one task, child-bearing, and are "not intended for great mental or physical labour; that they "are guilty of perjury far more often than men"; that "women, taken as a whole, are and remain thorough and incurable philistines"; and that they are "the inferior second sex in every respect".

Pip Pip!

Pseuds Corner

[Ella] is a very sweet person, very like my husband and his side of the family. Freddie is like me, a tortured twisted intellectual.

PRINCESS MICHAEL
(on her children)
Hello

Tim Merchant is a leading contemporary designer of curtain poles. "I've tried to create a minimalist product that makes a positive statement in what I call a 'post-future' style," he says.

The Times

Our photographer was a bit confused when I asked him to take a photograph of Susan Evasdaughter.

"Susan and whose daughter?" he inquired.

In fact, to add to the confusion, Susan's three-year-old daughter Phaedra isn't an Evasdaughter at all. She's a Susans (without the apostrophe).

Until I met Susan I believed that she had acquired her offbeat surname at birth or through marriage. In fact, she chose to call herself Evasdaughter — both as a tribute to her mother and a declaration of her feminism. Previously she had been just a plain Cooke.

"It's women who give birth to children, not men, so why should children automatically take their father's name?" she explains. That's why Phaedra has the surname Susansdaughter was felt to be too much of a mouthful.

Peke performers, left to right: Basia Briggs with Spooky and Muffy; Caspar Bentinck, Lady Camilla Dempster and her daughter Emily Harris with Tulip, Posy, Morris, Jasper and Ebony; Carole Langton with China; Pam Russ, peke nanny, with Truffle and Chelsea; Lady Mary Gaye Bonas and her son Jacobi Anstruther-Gough-Calthorpe with Munchkin; Sabina Bailey with Pushkin and Mishka; Isabel Clement with Merlin; Victoria Raymond with Bubble; Marina Clement with Fudge; Jessica Behar with Bertie and Lady Ravensdale with Barnabee and Bizzie-Bee.

Evening Standard

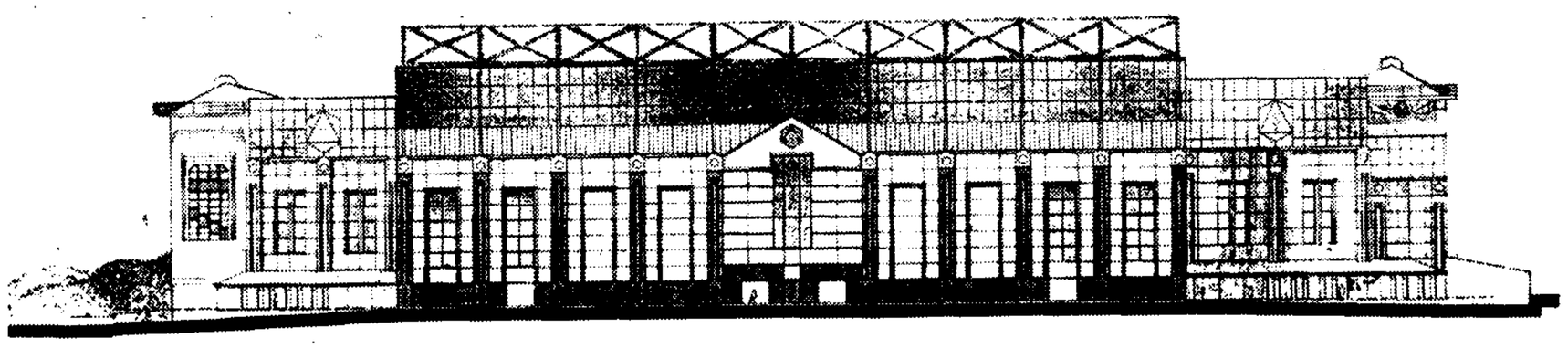
He's awfully good at presents: he gave me a tea-chest full of cheese labels for Christmas.

FLO BAYLEY (on husband Stephen)
Independent on Sunday

CONTRIBUTORS: Rosalind Stewart, Anon, Ed Hutson, J.E. Miller, R. Hitler.

£10 paid for entries

NOOKS and CORNERS



LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE **is the admirable slogan adopted by the development control sub-committee of the People's Republic of Islington. Unfortunately, as so often in the best of all possible worlds, it is an inconvenient maxim when the wishes of the people fail to correspond with what the people's representatives know what is best for them. A case in point is the redevelopment of Arsenal football stadium.**

Arsenal needs to rebuild part of its stadium with fixed seating to meet the requirements of the Taylor Report following the Hillsborough disaster. Last March it emerged that Arsenal had a fully worked out design for a new north stand, even though the previous month the local community had been told the football club did not have a scheme. In April, the design was revealed; although the Gillespie Neighbourhood Forum found it difficult to get any sense of what was proposed — indeed, council officers announced that they could not tell how high the proposed new building was.

By June it was clear that what Arsenal proposed to inflict on Finsbury Park was a crude steel monster — 400 feet wide and over 100 feet high, that is, three times the height of the surrounding two-storey houses over which it would loom — but the architect chosen, Richard Marshall of Messrs AD Consultants, of Sawtry, Cambridgeshire, attempted to alleviate its bulk by coating the exterior in commercial Post-Modern detailing.

The local community was not impressed, however, and another scheme was commissioned by the Group for the Alternative Arsenal Stand from the engineer, John Thorton, of Arups. This, inspired by the new stadium at Bari in Italy and by the Mound Stand at Lord's, is more elegant and much lower in bulk.

In September it was agreed that both schemes should be put before the RIBA for comment, but then Arsenal — which has never released its brief to its architect — reneged on this. By now it was clear that certain politicians wanted the Arsenal scheme to receive planning permission without any fuss. The leader of the council, Margaret Hodge, claimed that all the objections to the new north stand came only from that contemptible and unimportant sector of the community, middle-class homeowners. Mrs Hodge should know all about them, of course, as she herself lives in snooty Barnsbury; but in fact most of the people affected by the Arsenal stadium live in council-owned or housing association properties — and many of them, indeed, are that favoured species, ethnic minorities.

On 5 November, an application for full planning permission for a slightly revised design for Arsenal's new stand was put before Islington's development control sub-committee, with the extraordinary recommendation from Ian Crawley, head of planning, that although "the scheme has not satisfactorily met all reasonable planning objectives... it is in the interests of applicant and objectors to state a clear acceptance of a two tier stand of this form in principle on the grounds that its amenity impact is not sufficient to justify refusal. The grant of planning permission is therefore recommended..."

But, for once, the councillors present showed they had minds of their own and a unanimous resolution was passed that Arsenal should go away, revise the design further and bring it back on 17 December. It was noted that not only was the design unsatisfactory in every way, but also that not a single Arsenal supporter had written in support of it. This decision naturally infuriated Conducator Hodge and her cronies, who tabled a motion that the Arsenal scheme should be given planning permission at a full council meeting on 5 December, although this has now been withdrawn.

This is not a trivial matter. As the Royal Fine Art Commission has noted: "The design of the north stand is a national issue; the Taylor Report will result in a great many new stands all over the country and Arsenal must lead by showing an example... The Commission believes that the present design by AD Consultants is simply not good enough and that planning permission should be withheld on the understanding that a new design is prepared with the help of a first-rate consultant..."

So why is Islington council so very keen on the favoured Arsenal scheme? The football club was clearly told that planning permission would not be a problem, and the scheme was kept secret as long as possible so that a fully worked out design could be presented regardless of the comments of the local community. Indeed, in defiance of declared council policies, local consultation has been conspicuous by its absence. Margaret Hodge is a woman, so clearly freemasonry cannot be the cosy connection between Islington council, Arsenal and AD Consultants of Sawtry. Can it be a shared love of football and third-rate architecture? Surely not. I await developments with interest.

'Piloti'

● *See Football News*

OCTOBER SURPRISE

LAST Thursday Mrs Judy Moses-Nir gave an exclusive interview to the Israeli newspaper *Davar* in which she spoke at length for the first time about her suspicions concerning the death of her husband, Amiral.

Amiral Nir was an associate of Oliver North who negotiated the arms for hostages deal between the Iranians and Americans. He was mysteriously killed in an aircrash in Mexico in November 1990.

Judy Nir recalled how a representative of the Bush administration had visited her after her husband's death and had been very interested in what Amiral Nir knew of Bush's involvement in the arms for hostages scandal.

Mrs Nir also recalled how she had secret videos of Nir telling Oliver North that the Israelis could sink Reagan and Bush at any time. (Being cautious, she has copies of the tapes kept well out of harm's way.) She also told how Terry Waite went to Tel Aviv and met her husband, and that that her house had been burgled.

Mrs Nir was also scathing about the Israeli government. She claimed that she had suggested a post mortem examination should be carried out on her husband's body, but was dissuaded from having one by Israeli officials. She now regards this advice with deep suspicion.

Mrs Nir is no giddy widow: her family are major newspaper owners in Israel and she herself is a well-connected journalist. She points to those who would most likely benefit from the killing of her husband — to associates of Jacob Nimrodi, a close associate of the Likud leadership and a major Irangate player. No doubt by complete coincidence, she is also related to the late Robert Maxwell.

The Nir accusations are fascinating because they lead to the heart of the Reagan-Bush involvement in the arms for hostages scandal. They also mirror accusations made in the as yet unpublished book of Ari Ben Menashe, the man who helped cause all the rumpus over Robert Maxwell and Mossad last month.

Ben Menashe will return to London soon, which may be of little comfort to his old chum Nick Davies, the former *Mirror* foreign editor. Although Davies continues to deny his involvement with arms dealing, awkward facts continue to spill out. One of Ben Menashe's close friends in Israel, Adel Atamna, an Israeli Palestinian, recalls how Nick visited him with Ben Menashe to discuss the sale of aircraft parts and weapons.

UN NEWS

AS PREDICTED in the last *Eye*, Egypt's Boutros Boutros Ghali, will be the next secretary-general of the United Nations.

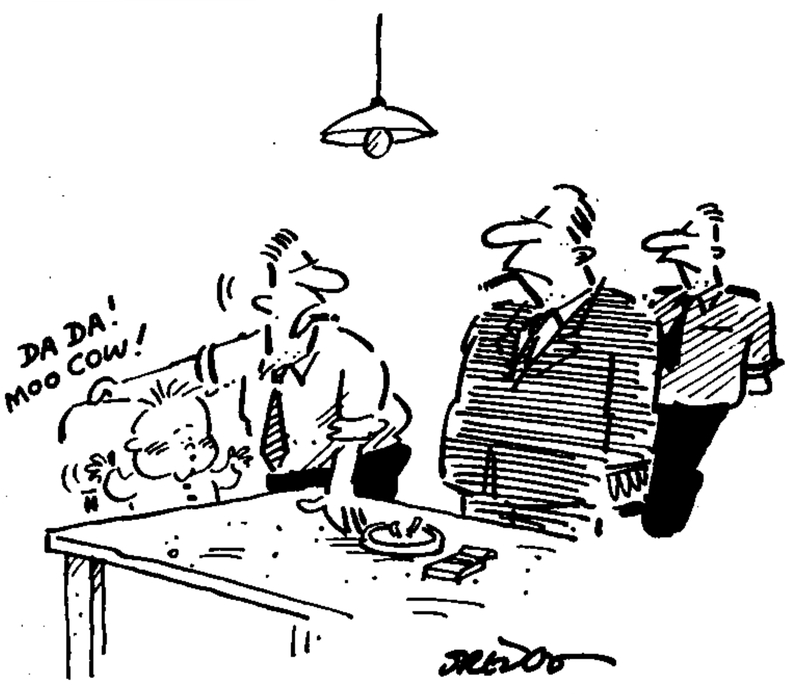
He will almost certainly set standards of invertebracy that will make previous champions like Kurt Waldheim and Javier Perez De Cuellar seem positively stiff-necked.

His surprise victory was a result of France's out-manoeuvring of America and Britain. The anglo-plot was to prolong the deadlock and thus provoke the non-aligned and African members of the security council into fighting among themselves. Then the US and Britain would bring in a safe western compromise.

However, the perfidious French teamed up with the non-aligned to get a clear majority for the French-speaking Paris-educated Ghali. Britain, although well aware that Ghali was as old as the sphinx, could not afford to alienate Egypt by using its veto.

In fact Egypt will be delighted to rid itself of Ghali, a Christian Arab married to a Jew, who rose to fame as the only Egyptian diplomat prepared to travel to Israel with Sadat. Since both his grandfather and great grandfather were killed for collaborating with the British, other Arabs refer to the family as "The Chain of Treachery". Because of this, and because he is a Copt, he could never make foreign minister. But as deputy prime minister his responsibilities included immigration (not a very taxing portfolio) and foreign affairs. The new foreign minister Amr Mousa could not stand Ghali; but could not sack him because of his extensive knowledge about Egypt's dealing with the West and Israel.

Mousa, however, was the country's delegate to the UN until recently — and saw the possibilities. Get rid of Ghali, promote Egypt's interests in the New World Order — and give the economy a big boost by packing the UN with well-paid Egyptians. By the end of five years, the New Order at the UN will look remarkably like a pyramid: Ghali on top, loads of other Egyptians below — and very little activity at any level. In Arabic, Ghali means "expensive". He will be.



"He's starting to talk, guv"

TV

Clarissa (BBC2)

Ashenden (BBC1)

Stanley And The Women (ITV)

OH DAMN the vandals and philistines of the BBC! For they have taken Mr Richardson's delightful and subtle masterpiece *Clarissa* (1748-49) and turned it into a vulgar entertainment for the common herd.

Hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of his million exquisitely-written words have been jettisoned, the capacious masterpiece squeezed into a mere three parts. The first psychological novel in English has been vulgarised into what one of the scandal sheet calls "a prescient and disturbingly relevant story of an 18th century date rape." Oh, weep for Richardson! Oh, weep for Clarissa!

Well, sorry, but there won't be any of that kind of bollocks here. This traditional objection of the crusties and stuffies when television touches a dusty old book is ripe for demolition. It is time to make the point that television has a long and impressive tradition of improving on imperfect works of literature. *Clarissa* — ravishingly adapted for BBC2 as a very close relative of the film of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (incidentally, another duff and unread book sorted out by celluloid) — is a perfect example.

For a start, only about five people have ever read the entire million words of Richardson's eight-volume novel. Admiring *Clarissa* is one of those pieces of cultural pretence — as with *The Late Show* and Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, people like it to be there, and to mention it occasionally in conversation, but few would be able to pass an exam on it. The unusual (and successful) decision to entrust the scripts not to dramatists but to the academics David Nokes and Janet Barron is a tacit admission of this difficulty. How else was the producer to find a writer who had read the original?

An equal piece of pragmatism from the BBC team was the decision that the million words would boil down to three 60-minute episodes (if you want a comparison, the 150,000 words of *Brideshead Revisited* were allotted 13 one-hour slots.)

Regarded by the Richardson groupies as appalling cheek, the judgement shows impeccable editorial sense. Square Eyes is regrettably not one of the five people to have reached the end of the original text, but from partial forced immersion during higher education he or she is fairly sure that a lean and compelling story — of Lovelace's pursuit and final brutal ruination of the virtuous Clarissa — is buffeted around to distraction by windy sermons and diversions.

On television, there is merely the relentless narrative, attractively presented, with large parts of the RSC acting their bodices off. Your only real worry, watching it, is that the excellent adaptation might lead a viewer back to reading the original.

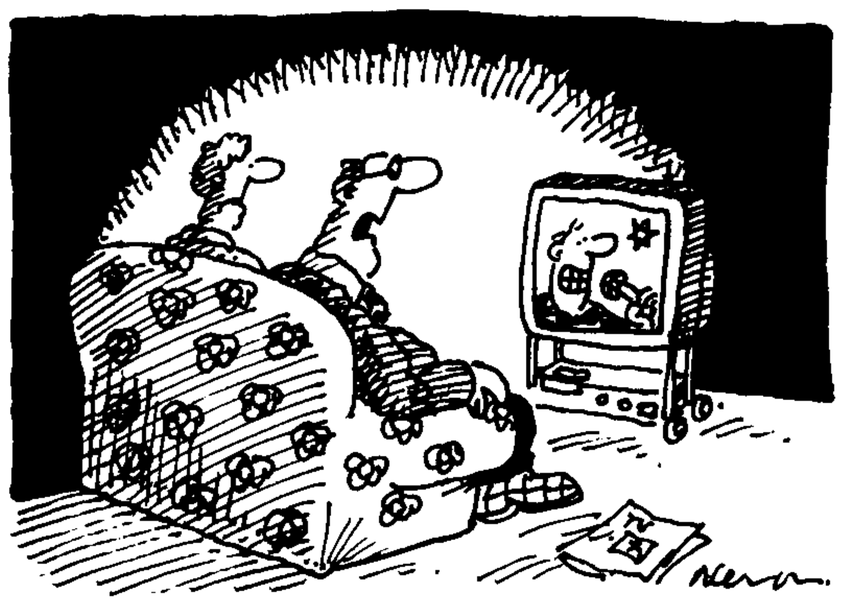
Another flawed writer given a useful leg-up by television is W. Somerset Maugham. His slight but exciting *Ashenden* stories have been used as the source for an intelligent and somewhat more subtle Sunday night spy series, scripted by David Pirie. sion does ruin a novel because of the medium's innate good taste and tendency to intellectualise. For example, Central is proudly boasting that the misogyny has been stripped from its version of Sir Kingsley Amis's *Stanley And The Women*, and viewing proves that this is so. But what is the point? It is like doing *Hamlet* without the hesitation or *Bleak House* without the suffering (the populist Dickens, of course, being another writer to find his perfect interpreter in TV). Kingsley Amis, though, has just been unlucky.

The psychological depth which Alan Bennett brought to his portrayal of a German operative in Switzerland, in the second episode, was another illustration of the way in which television can provide complexities missing in the original texts.

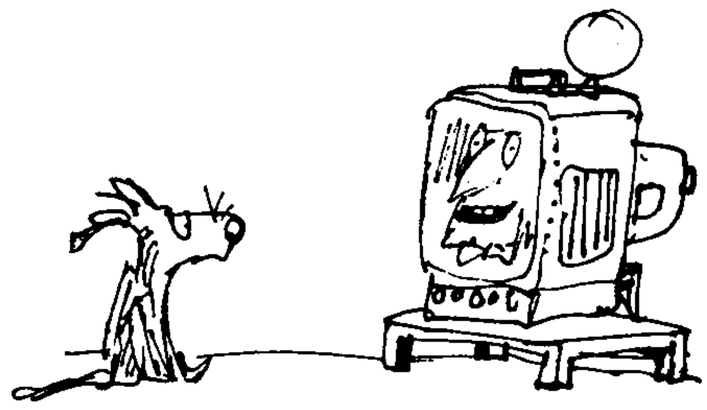
Inevitably, whenever an author like Maugham is brought to the small screen, the letters columns of the *Telegraph* and elsewhere fill up with moans about how Bobby was specifically a blond and the Malayan Rifles would never have worn garters for tiffin, but the fact is that the medium's record in serialising works of literature, of all genres, is astonishingly good. High-class texts like *The Fortunes Of War* and *The Raj Quartet* were at least matched by their adaptations. And, in the detective and spy genres respectively, the books of Colin Dexter and John Le Carré can be claimed to have been improved by their small-screen realisations. Narratives were streamlined, characters fattened out by actors.

Occasionally, it is true, television does ruin a novel because of the medium's innate good taste and tendency to intellectualise. For example, Central is proudly boasting that the misogyny has been stripped from its version of Sir Kingsley Amis's *Stanley And The Women*, and viewing proves that this is so. But what is the point? It is like doing *Hamlet* without the hesitation or *Bleak House* without the suffering (the populist Dickens, of course, being another writer to find his perfect interpreter in TV). Kingsley Amis, though, has just been unlucky.

'Square Eyes'



"I'll miss Wogan — but then I always did"



MEDIA NEWS

WHAT CAN explain the absence from our screens during the recent civil war in Yugoslavia of Kate Adie, the BBC's "chief news correspondent" and forces' sweetheart?

While ITN's Paul Davies was sending graphic reports from the besieged ancient city of Dubrovnik, Adie was kept confined to barracks owing to the indisposition of BBC camera crews to working with her in dangerous places.

Unaware of the camera crews' reluctance, Adie spent several days hassling foreign editor John Mahoney to send her to the front. When she discovered that lesser hackette Carol Walker had been despatched to Belgrade, she produced almost as much noise as a Serbian federal army bombardment until her former mentor, Chris Cramer, head of news gathering, ordered her to stay away from the newsroom until further notice. Instead of dodging bullets and mortars, she had to be content with lecturing British squaddies in Germany and Northern Ireland about her previous adventures.

PS: Adie is suing Stewart Steven's *Mail on Sunday* for libel for suggesting in an unsigned article a couple of months ago that she was cowardly, an accusation which is the very reverse of the truth.

IT'S NOT only ITV Sport's rugby try competition that costs the earth (see last *Eye*).

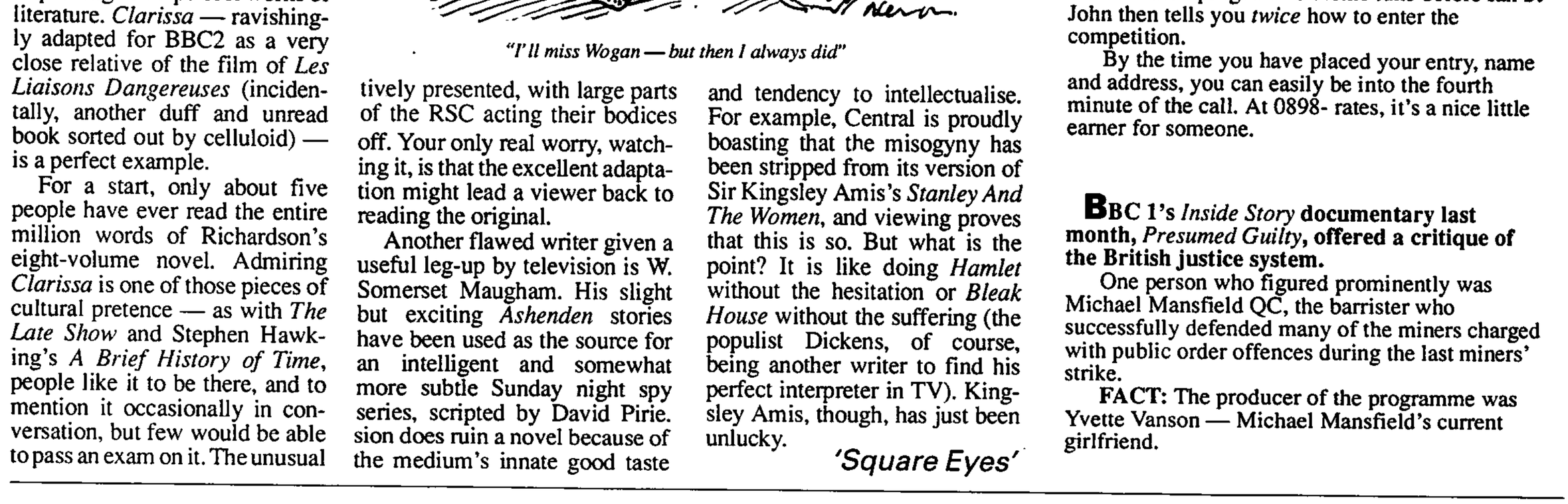
Anyone telephoning to enter the "Goal of the Day" competitions on Sundays is treated to the whole *Match* programme theme tune before Ian St John then tells you *twice* how to enter the competition.

By the time you have placed your entry, name and address, you can easily be into the fourth minute of the call. At 0898- rates, it's a nice little earner for someone.

BBC 1's *Inside Story* documentary last month, *Presumed Guilty*, offered a critique of the British justice system.

One person who figured prominently was Michael Mansfield QC, the barrister who successfully defended many of the miners charged with public order offences during the last miners' strike.

FACT: The producer of the programme was Yvette Vanson — Michael Mansfield's current girlfriend.


CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
BBC TELEVISION CENTRE
'GROSSLY OFFENSIVE'...
MPs call for ban of LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST
'CAN'T BE TOLERATED BY DECENT PEOPLE'...
AND 'DESERVES TO GO IN A DUSTBIN'...
WE AGREE...
BAR
TH
"THAT'S WHY WE'RE SENDING HER TO MANCHESTER!"
"Treble Senatogens all round!"
Yoof Dept. to go North
Ken Pyne

I-BSkyB

THE wife of murdered train robber Charlie Wilson sobbed yesterday as she told an inquest how he was gunned down on the patio of their £500,000 Spanish villa.

Earlier, police revealed that Wilson, 57, was executed after crossing rival drug gangsters.

Pat Wilson, 56, said a young man came to the door asking for Charlie and she showed him in.

It was her 35th wedding anniversary, and she was watching Sky TV while her husband hosed down the patio at their Marbella home last April.

MIKE SULLIVAN
The Sun

Words of freedom... Terry talks on Sky TV

The Sun

CONTRIBUTORS: Dave Lewis, Charles Rudgard.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

IN THE COURTS

ONCE again strange things appear to be going on in legal circles on the septic isle of Jersey.

For some little time it has been expected, not least by the man himself, that the present bailiff (chief justice) Sir Peter Crill would step down and be replaced by the deputy bailiff, former attorney-general Vernon Tomes. Crill, after all, is approaching 66 while Tomes is already 60 and Buggin's Turn traditionally rules.

But now it seems that Sir Peter not only indicated no wish to retire this side of 70, by which time Tomes would probably be held to be too old, but that there is some reluctance in official quarters to encourage him to make way for his deputy.

Certainly there seems no rush from the Home Office, which decides the succession on behalf of the Queen, to see Tomes promoted. On the contrary, Tomes has been under pressure from the Home Office because of complaints about his slowness in delivering judgements.

Indeed so delicate has Tomes's position become that his supporters — of whom there are many on Jersey — have been writing in support to those who rule his future.

Tomes's chances of becoming bailiff have also not been helped by his somewhat colourful lifestyle and criticisms he generated when attorney-general for failing to perhaps prosecute with expected vigour the investigation of corrupt bank manager Derek Foster.

Whether Tomes is promoted or indeed remains as deputy bailiff would seem likely to continue to be matters for debate.

HACKWATCH No 11

Mr Pepys

WHAT IS the point of the weekly Mr Pepys diary in the London *Evening Standard*, bearing in mind that the paper already has a full-page diary every day?

Pepys's column was invented a couple of years ago as a form of sheltered employment for clapped-out Fleet Street diarists such as Tim Satchell, David Skan and Peter McKay. But Skan was fired last year for being perpetually drunk; and after Satchell's dismissal this year (for being too useless even for Mr Pepys) the column went into abeyance for a while.

Since the summer, however, Mr Pepys has quietly crept back into the paper, appearing every Tuesday. Peter McHackey, aka the World's Worst Columnist, is still in charge, assisted by one Rohan Daft (sic), an obscure hack whose sole claim to fame is that he once wrote a book called *Daft About Lager*. As the following highlights show, Mr Pepys's eye for a story is as unerring as ever.

20 August "Does anyone care very much about television? Mr Pepys cannot remember the last time he heard a television programme being discussed at a dinner table. It's just for children now, or incompetents who can't amuse themselves."

3 September "Why do we put up with the A21 trunk road? Those of us who wish to get to Hastings from time to time... are driven half mad trying to negotiate this twisting farm track with the cheek to call itself an A road."

17 September Mr Pepys reveals — only six years after most other newspapers first mentioned the fact — that Andreas Whittam Strobes of the *Independent* can be seen "jogging" in Kensington most mornings. "Mr Whittam Smith, who is 54, lives in the area," Mr Pepys adds.

1 October Mr Pepys has to grovel. "Lord Weidenfeld's forthcoming memoirs will not be composed in any spirit of revenge at what was written about him by a former wife, I am happy to say. My suggestion last week that they might — along with other personal remarks! — was made in a light-hearted way and was obviously apocryphal. Mr Pepys is more than happy to withdraw them and apologise to Lord Weidenfeld, the doyen of British publishing." Having got this off his chest, he turns to a more important matter: "Why can't the police standardise their sirens?"

8 October In the absence of any gossip, Mr Pepys turns drama critic: "Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*, directed by Philip Prowse at the Barbican, is the Irish genius's most annoying play." He also reports that Michelle Pfeiffer is "acknowledged to be the loveliest film actress in Hollywood."

15 October Despite his oft-advertised scorn for the medium, Mr Pepys has been watching telly. "Isn't it nice to have that Frank Bough back on the box again?" Elsewhere in his column he writes about TV coverage of the Booker Prize, the possible outcome of the auction for ITV franchises and the disappearance of "the famous five" from TV-am.

22 October Mr Pepys addresses himself to shell-suits. "Shouldn't they be banned completely as a hazard to public safety as well as an affront to elegance?" Further down the page, he poses another urgent question: "Did you see the pictures in yesterday's papers of Ronald Reagan?"

29 October Mr Pepys has "discovered an interesting fact" about Sir Robin Butler, secretary to the Cabinet. His full name is Sir Robin Daft Butler. Daft, Pepys continues, is "a grand old English name of Norman origin" — as used by that noted "young member of the clan" Rohan Daft, author of *Daft About Lager*, "his seminal work on beers".

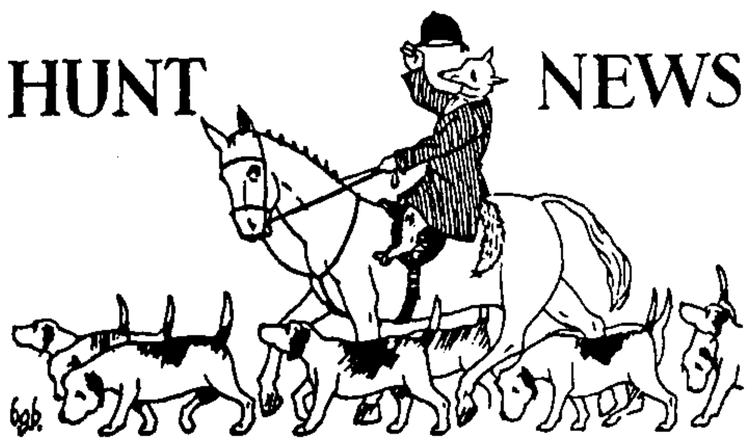
5 November For no obvious reason, Mr Pepys suddenly raves about the work of science fiction writer Philip K. Dick. "This is the kind of writing that is important now, not the waffling preciousness that wins literary awards." He then grumbles that "Jumping Jacks — surely the most amusing of all fireworks — do not appear to exist any more."

12 November Questions, questions. "With the death of film star Yves Montand... is there anyone of interest left in France? Certainly the French appear to have given up producing interesting young people... Do we really want to commit ourselves to closer union with these dull people?"

19 November Once again, our columnist has been watching a lot of television for someone who affects to despise it. "There's a BBC comedy show, *Birds of a Feather*, you may have seen. Vulgar stuff, but no worse than others..." Pepys also draws attention to a BBC2 show in which the Communist lesbian Beatrix Campbell "interviewed three snarling homophobes" — one of whom, though he doesn't mention it, was Peter McHackey, aka Pepys.

26 November Mr Pepys suggests that the Cathedrals Express from Oxford to London, on which famous dons and authors travel, is "Britain's smartest train" — a point he has nicked from the previous week's *Independent* magazine and the *New York Observer*, though he neglects to mention either source. Meanwhile, Pepys discloses that Jennifer Paterson, who writes occasional articles about cookery for the *Spectator*, has been recruited as a contributor to the *Oldie* magazine. A scoop at last!

HUNT NEWS



NINE hunt saboteurs from the Oxford and West London groups were recently awarded £12,000 compensation by a court in Aylesbury after they sued Thames Valley police for wrongful arrest and various associated illegal actions.

The wrongful arrests happened on 11 November 1989 when the saboteurs had sought to disrupt a meet of the Old Berkeley Beagles. That afternoon the police made 21 arrests using 46 officers in an operation that was directed by Superintendent Bill Hughes from the comfort of his home in Bicester.

Hughes had decided his officers should arrest anyone who could be identified as a saboteur for breaching the peace, regardless of the actual circumstances. The nine saboteurs who sued were taken into custody at 4.30pm and detained in overheated cells at Aylesbury police station until five minutes after public transport had closed down for the night.

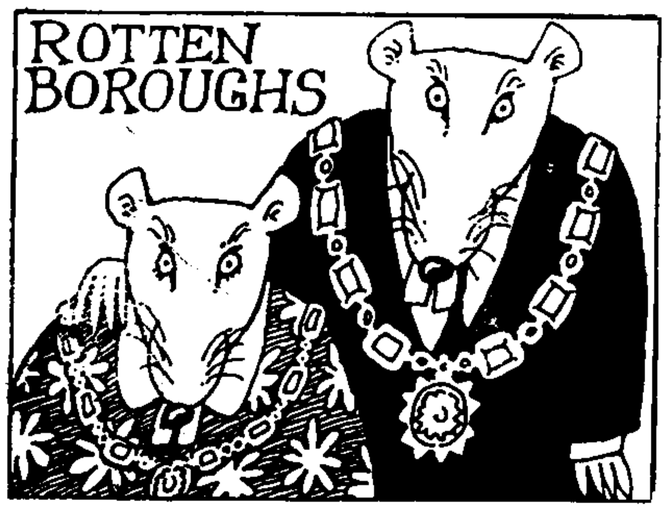
One female saboteur asked an officer how she was supposed to get home, to which he responded that she could try hitching. When she suggested the police might have a rape or murder case on their hands as a result, he apparently answered that this would not be likely in her case. Another saboteur gave evidence that a police officer had told him: "Next time you'll know not to fuck with the Aylesbury."

In his summing up in favour of the plaintiffs, the judge said the custody officer, a Sergeant Davey, had not understood what constituted a breach of the peace and had hence been "incapable of the proper fulfilment of his duty". The police actions contravened the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and, added the judge, the saboteurs should have been released at 6pm.

Instead they were detained for a further three hours to check their names and addresses (a requirement which is against the rules where the supposed offence is merely a breach of the peace), and were then kept for a further three hours for no particular reason.

The judge decided the arrests had been wrongful and the awards varied from person to person, the lowest being £50 and the highest £1,600. One saboteur received £1,600 plus an additional £500 for being buzzed by a police helicopter. However, despite the victory the saboteurs feel the exemplary damages element of the award was too low at £850, since its purpose should be to deter others and reflect outrage at arbitrary and oppressive behaviour.

PS: Both Superintendent Hughes and Sergeant Davey have been promoted since the incident.



BROMLEY

EVENTS IN scandal-soaked Bromley have taken a turn for the worse with the resignation of disgraced social services director Mike Carpenter only a few weeks after he had been suspended by councillors who had found "irregularities" in financial documents.

Carpenter's shock departure on Halloween had nothing to do with his rendezvous, six days later, with Inspector Knacker of the Met's fraud squad, who wanted to question the SS man over allegations that he had benefited from a trip to America to check out privatised homes.

Unfortunately Carpenter's colleagues in the borough's crisis-racked social services department failed to show due sympathy for their ex-boss during his suspension and had to be warned by management following the announcement of his resignation that "it wouldn't be appropriate to be seen going around smiling".

Nevertheless, Carpenter's resignation marks the culmination of two years of chaos within the department which has led to:

- Knacker investigating the awarding of council contracts drawn up while the town hall was privatising anything it could lay their hands on.
- Contracts being handed to teams charging more than the town hall.
- Contracts being awarded to redundancy-happy "private" firms staffed by recently-departed council officers.
- Losses of £400,000 following the botched privatisation of old people's and children's homes, following a "miscalculation" in the projected figures.
- Demonstrations by kids in care against their new guardians, broken up by Knacker with alleged "excessive force".

Life took a turn for the worse when Carpenter was accused by the local branch of the care group NAYPIC of revealing confidential information about one of his young charges to members of the public. While Bromley's ombudsman investigated, Bromley's chief executive Nigel Palk put the boot in, asking Carpenter to explain why a private firm, Albert Abela, had paid Carpenter and social services committee chairman Monty Blazey to go on a "fact-finding" trip to America to look at private homes.

Interestingly, it now transpires that a former Albert Abela director was also on the board of a skin-care company, Bodylink, which was tendering for various bodily services attached to Bromley's care. A social services report of the time says: "Mr Carpenter had been having discussions with various companies regarding the difficulties experienced by older people in purchasing hair, body and skin care treatments... a company, Bodylink, has now expressed an interest in offering [a service]. The Director of Social Services has negotiated with the company."

Bodylink received the contract. Strangely, Coun Blazey failed to declare an interest in the outcome of the privatisation talks and Inspector Knacker is still investigating whether Carpenter's and Blazey's involvement with Albert Abela and the trip to America went beyond the normal realms of junketing or was vital to Bromley's care provision.

MURKEYSIDE

HARRY RIMMER'S minority regime is on its last legs with 18 of the 41 councillors still left in the Labour group fed up with the way his clique is running Liverpool.

They've sent a "dump Rimmer" petition to Neil Kinnock and, nowadays Harry can only count on the support of less than 25 percent of the council.

Nevertheless, help comes from other quarters — namely the boys in blue. Hardly a week goes by without one or other of the city's elected representatives being arrested by the local bill. Inspector Knacker always says the collars are "non-political"; but credibility for such claims is wearing thin. People strongly suspect the police tactic because all those arrested for questioning have one thing in common — they're Labour opponents of Harry Rimmer.

A leading signatory of the anti-Rimmer letter to Kinnock was Coun Jack Spriggs — arrested in connection with the stealing of cash from a trade union welfare fund. Those with inside information know Spriggs is "clean"; but his arrest for "questioning" is bound to tarnish his political reputation. Among the three others arrested with Spriggs was Tony Gavin, NALGO's Liverpool full-time official. That this took place during vital negotiations to settle the seven-month NALGO dispute was coincidental.

There is also the case of Coun Joan Brown — nicked for allegedly assaulting semi-literate education chair, Roger Lafferty. The original charge, a section 47 assault, was reduced to one of common assault by the police. Now Brown faces a magistrate instead of a jury.

Rimmer, meanwhile, is deputy chair of the Murkeyside Police Authority, whose leading police officers, masons to a man, are trying to do down Alison Halford because they suspect her sexual orientation. It will be interesting to see which side Rimmer favours in this long-running disciplinary case.

EVERY time Degsy is arrested, it guarantees him airtime on the TV chat shows. He popped up again on a cheapo Granada events programme last month to plug his panto role as King Rat.

During the programme Degsy was asked his opinion of the latest film releases. He strongly recommended Danny De Vito's *Other People's Money*. The bimbo presenter didn't see any irony in Degsy's choice; but countless Murkeyside taxpayers fumed and reached for the off switch.

Meanwhile Degsy's role in the purchase of ICL computers for the local fire brigade has been added to Knacker's investigative brief (*Eye* 762). For some reason, some members of the fire authority break into a cold sweat when the £1.8 million deal is mentioned. One such is Coun Morris Lee, who represents Knowsley on the county-wide body. His wife is at least sympathetic to his plight. "Don't worry Morrie, luv," she cooed recently in the boozer. "If ya go to jail I'll bring yer in some sandwiches!"

TOWER HAMLETS

WHAT lay behind the comments of Liberal Democrat councillor Jeremy Shaw on his recent mercy mission from Tower Hamlets to Bangladesh?

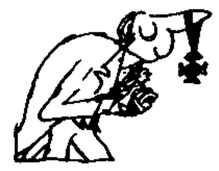
Shaw took valuable time off his campaign to ditch Peter Shore from the parliamentary seat of Bethnal Green and Stepney to visit the cyclone-ridden ancestral home of many of his would-be constituents. Accompanying him were 30 tons of clothing for the starving masses of the Ganges valley.

The altruistic Shaw delivered the clothes with a warm message for any Bangladeshis planning to leave the mud-flats and seek solace in refugee-ridden Tower Hamlets: "The borough is full to bursting. Anyone leaving Bangladesh and coming to Tower Hamlets expecting the council to house them is totally irresponsible."

Is immigration in Tower Hamlets now unmanageable — or is Shaw peddling a new line in gunboat diplomacy? A clue may lie in the municipal election results for Shaw's Bethnal Green homeland last year.

Although his own Weavers division houses most of the borough's 30,000 Bangladeshis, in neighbouring St Peter's the neo-Nazi British National Party won an astonishing 25 per cent of the vote at the last council elections. Both council seats are in Shaw's parliamentary polling area and it remains to be seen whether the Asians or the Aryans have the stronger electoral presence.

O.B.N.



CUPID And The King is Princess Michael's new book about five royal mistresses. They're romantic stories full of entertainment and facts.

They're-easy-to-read history. Highbrow reviewers say she doesn't write like a professor of history.

True, the Princess is much more fun to learn from. Published by Harper Collins, at £17.50 the book's a little pricey.

But if you can afford that it'd make a jolly Christmas present. The spirited Princess Michael isn't just a pretty face.

WOODROW WYATT
News of the World

Submitted by Anon.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

BRENT

HOPES THAT the demise of Britain's daftest political grouping, Bent's Democratic Labour Party, would signal a return to normal municipal incompetence have been dashed by the wild pronouncements of the council's latest crazed power-broker, "independent" councillor Poline Nyaga.

Nyaga defected from Labour last May and with the help of the even madder Nkechi Amalu-Johnson (*Eyes passim*) put the Tories in power in exchange for Conservative support for a portfolio of dodgy African nationalist policies.

Although Amazulu and Nyaga are now no longer on screaming terms, Tory control has been bolstered by further defections and the Africanisation of Bent has been put on the back-burner. Nevertheless, Nyaga has decreed that if Tory council leaders don't cede to her longstanding demand to build a local Africa Centre, she will move that all existing cultural community centres — Caribbean, Pakistani etc — be closed down. So much for third world solidarity. With councillors still smarting from recent allegations that Bent African Women's Council conned a local housing association over allocations to the homeless, Nyaga may have to continue waiting, threats and all.

She is determined to pick up the mantle dropped by her mentor, Amazulu, who was recently sacked as housing chair, and is also demanding that all councillors receive full-time offices. If no spare space can be found at the town hall, empty council houses should be coverted into secretariats — this in a borough where homeless queues run up and down Neasden High Street and the council's debts are the highest in Britain.

Council leader Bob Blackman has his eyes set on other targets. In making the most of the Tories' precarious hold on power, he has set Bent on a crash-course of free-market radicalism via which it could soon outstrip Westminster and Wandsworth as the most commercially-motivated authority in the land. Town hall officers have been told to draw up plans to divide their remit into 96 "business units" and put as much as 90 per cent of council services out to competitive tender.

First, however, comes the small matter of clawing back the missing £100 million owed by Brentfolk in rent, rates and poll tax. The council has ingeniously paid a local free newspaper to print a "wanted list" of thousands and thousands of names and addresses of poll tax non-payers. According to finance chairman Richard Buckley: "There's been no amnesty for those who haven't paid the community charge, we want non-payers to be shamed into coughing up and we are encouraging residents to shop on those whom they know haven't paid."

Meanwhile council officers in the debt recovery section have been set targets which, if they surpass them, will put them in line to receive a cut of the council's £20,000 "bounty" fund and win the highly-coveted, if Maoist sounding, prize of Hero of the Council.

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'

WHILE MOST farmers at least try to appear eco-friendly these days, stalwarts of the Royal Cornwall Agricultural Association are carrying on a scorched-earth policy.

With its ramshackle buildings and lurid sodium lights, the association's showground at Wadebridge already looks like a post-war trading estate. Now the Cornish yeomen are set on ruining part of a beautiful wooded valley in order to expand their shanty empire.

The RCAA — one of whose vice-presidents is the Prince of Wales — bought the picturesque Holy Valley along with a block of land adjoining their show site when they learned that the Wadebridge by-pass was to run alongside them. To the horror of locals they are pressing ahead with a wheeze to fill a part of the valley with spoil from the road construction.

The woodland stream is to be enclosed in a culvert serviced by five laddered tubes; the idea being to level the show site and thus make more room for burger vans and stalls selling wax jackets and horse brasses. Odd when the rural lobby insists that farmers are the natural custodians of the countryside.

Defending what locals call an act of environmental desecration, show secretary Chris Riddle claims the "reclamation" is essential to replace a corner of the showground lost to the road development. Without it the annual dog show might not be fitted in, he warns chillingly.

Meanwhile the charity commissioners have been asked to investigate the land purchase by the RCAA, a registered charity.

WHILE the multinational pesticide companies bankroll the farming press so no editor dares run a serious anti-chemical story, only the BBC remains free of the chemical sweeteners and thus able to report on the agribusiness without fawning to product managers.

However, through its venture into subscription TV, the Beeb is about to put itself in hock to the agrochemical industry just as the trade rags did 20 years ago.

The corporation's subscription channel — BBC Select — will carry a specialist programme for farmers following its launch next year. The publicity blurb claims Farming Now will be "objective and independent". Yet the contracting company, Quay Subscription Television, is to carry sponsored features — a guarantee that any true editorial independence will go out of the window.

The agrochemical giants are certain to be the major sponsors of the new service — they're the only ones left in farming with any real money. That is why the trade rags are chock full of supplements and "special features" tied to their latest products. Any editor carrying a critical story risks losing the lot.

Oddly, no one knows this better than the able and outspoken Marcus Oliver, who is running the new service. As former editor of the weekly tabloid Farming News he nearly saw the paper shut down for daring to publish an anti-pesticide piece.

While it would be hard to describe the Beeb's current rural output (TV's Countryfile and Radio Four's Farming Today) as fearless seekers after truth, they're free to report big-business farming without fear or favour. With the likes of Rhone-Poulenc and Monsanto spending millions on a sister channel, how long can this last?

IT'S HARD to see why the green welly brigade should be so surprised at the Royal Agricultural Society's report extolling the virtues of intensive farming. Despite past connections with the Countryside Commission, Sir Derek Barber, who headed the report's editorial team, has always been an efficiency-first merchant.

It was his 1960s book *Farming For Profits* that robbed many an agricultural student of any sentimental idea about farming having a purpose other than the purely utilitarian. Sir Derek now heads a land-use company set up by the multinational giant Booker.

No doubt it's because of such sensible ideas that the buffers at the RAS gave him the job of leading the study team. Any conclusion that reduced chemical inputs or, horror of horror, organic farming might be the way to go could have been highly embarrassing. Each year the society pockets tens of thousands of pounds from big-business sponsors and exhibitors.

Church News

THERE is to be no Christmas truce at Lincoln Cathedral, where the dean, the Very Rev Brandon "Brandy" Jackson, has spent the past year waging war against his residentiary canons.

Following his earlier outburst (see *Eyes* 759, 763, 772), "Brandy" has now celebrated the season of goodwill by accusing his archdeacon, the Ven. Christopher Laurence, of "sheer hypocrisy" and "an appalling attitude". In a hysterical letter to Laurence, of which the *Eye* has obtained a copy, Jackson also claims that the archdeacon and his two fellow-canons "are responsible for many breaches of the law".

This is a reference to the loss of £50,000 made when Lincoln Cathedral's copy of Magna Carta was exhibited in Australia in 1988. Jackson, who was appointed to Lincoln by Mrs Thatcher a year later, has used this financial debacle as a pretext for demanding the canons' resignation, continually hinting that they must have had their fingers in the till. But an investigation this summer by Inspector Knacker, egged on by Dean Jackson, failed to find any evidence of corruption. Meanwhile, a report by the Bishop of Lincoln, the Rt Rev Robert Hardy, ended up censuring both sides. "The residentiary canons... and the dean have conducted themselves shamefully," the Bish concluded. "It all seems a long way from Jesus of Nazareth."

The latest eruption from "Brandy" Jackson seems even further from the paths of peace and righteousness. "Your irresponsibility is breathtaking," he tells his archdeacon. "Your persistent campaigning to shift the blame on to me is devious, dishonest and wicked. Sadly, it is consistent with the style of behaviour I have come to expect from you... It is this cavalier disregard for your stewardship as trustees of cathedral moneys which has disgusted the bishop and me — and millions of people out there in the big world. The scandal is that you are allowed to continue in office."

If Laurence and his fellow canons had resigned two years ago, Jackson writes, "you would have been able to leave Lincoln with some honour preserved (in the way that Lord Carrington resigned over the Falklands). It is now too late. You have boxed yourselves into a corner and all you can do is fight to the bitter end".

Small wonder that the student counsellor from the University of East Anglia who was brought in recently as a "conciliator" between the dean and chapter has now abandoned his task in despair at "the high levels of fear and rage" at the cathedral. The counsellor's final report concludes: "This is the stuff from which violence is born..."

'B.L. Zebub'

"... and he must be rich, Tanya, he goes everywhere by public transport..."

CULT CORNER

CHRISTMAS is coming and the Church of Scientology is hoping to get fat by offering salvation at a discount and a free (well, up to a point) amnesty to dissidents.

The 1991 *Holiday Catalog* offers *The Basic Dianetics Picture Book* and *The Basic Scientology Picture Book*. But the unmissable Christmas special has to be the set of 18 technical volumes reduced from $2,700 to $1,890. How could anyone avoid reading 18 volumes of tedious, polysyllabic rubbish by L. Ron Hubbard himself? For only a little less, at $1,430, one could buy the 22 leatherbound volumes of *L. Ron Hubbard's Life Time Editions*, which include his famous treaties stating that radiation poisoning can be cured by vitamin therapy. For a mere $3,250 you can get the "Auditor Tools Package". Mostly this is the "E-Meter", a simplified lie detector which detects changes in the electrical resistance of people's hands when they sweat.

A lot of Scientologist therapy involves training people so the machine does not register when they tell untruths, which is perhaps just as well, since they tell such whoppers.

The "amnesty" is a big money-spinning effort as well. "There is an excess of injustice in this world. In times of war there are some casualties. The individual sometimes gets trampled. Justice can be harsh," Hubbard's successor David Miscavige intones, inviting all those he has been persecuting to return. It helps of course that some of them are suing for large damages for alleged kidnappings and false imprisonment!

To keep the till bells tinkling, Miscavige recently announced in the cult's East Grinstead headquarters that a lot of the courses offered in the past had been tampered with. There was no offer to return the tens of thousands of pounds paid by suckers for the materials last time, but for a similar fee the new, purified and unabridged ravings of LRH are now available. "Perfection is the expected result" — and of course more profits for the moneygrabbing cult.

Sally Deedes

COT DEATHS — or sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) — is the biggest killer of babies under eight months in this country. In winter, it can claim the lives of anything up to 20 children a day; at other times four or five children may fall victim. Despite this, the Department of Health seems set on sabotaging the release of information about what may well be the cause of such tragedies.

Last month the *Eye* detailed the Government's inquiry into the correlation between the rise in cot deaths and the introduction of fire retardant chemicals into cot mattresses. The inquiry was prompted by the findings of Barry Richardson, of the Penarth Research Institute in Guernsey, who had been researching the arsenic preservative OBPA on PVC-covered mattresses.

Working on 50 mattresses on which babies had died, he and his assistant suffered continual headaches and found the cause to be the gases phosphene and stibene, generated in the foam. The material was affected by the nitrogen compounds in a child's perspiration and produced gases through the biodeterioration of phosphate and antimony compound in the fire retardant material.

While the government inquiry dismissed this theory, at the same time it advised manufacturers to "exercise prudence in the use of additives in cot furnishing".

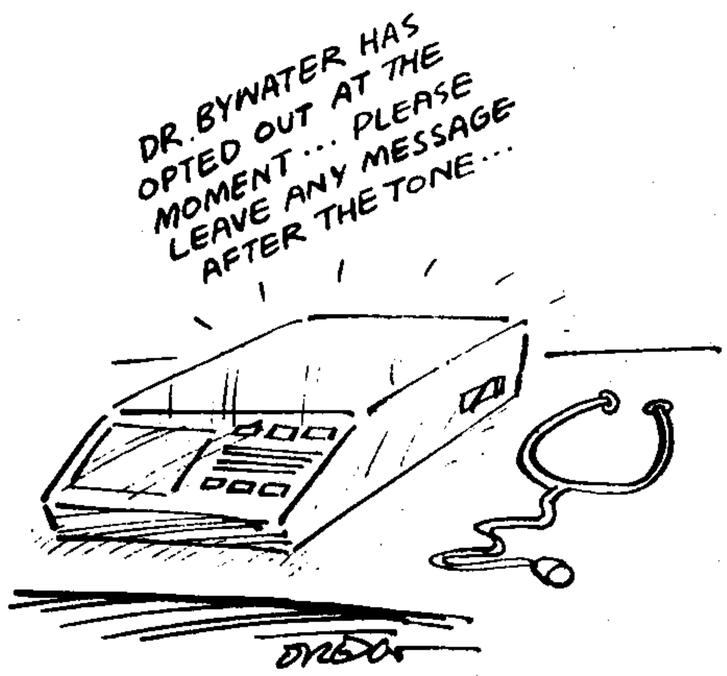
The committee's year-long investigation was virtually pointless, according to Mr Richardson, because it carried out no blood tests on victims. "I arranged to have tests on babies who had died on mattresses apparently generating stibene and found that the antimony content in the blood was two to five times the normal *maximum* level in a normal child," he said.

He added that some babies, including the son of broadcaster Anne Diamond, had died while sleeping in the prone position on new lambskin-covered mattresses. Penarth research has shown that lambs reared on the chalk downlands of Hampshire and Wiltshire contain no detectable arsenic or antimony, but lambs reared in Cornwall and parts of Devon had very high levels of these elements and their natural biodeterioration generates arsine, stibene and related toxic gases.

Mr Richardson also says: "Contamination occurs in Australia and New Zealand where lamb skins are extensively used as cot bedding and it is not surprising that SIDS rates are exceptionally high in some areas where lambs are reared on soils containing these elements."

Given the Government's stubborn refusal to publicise these findings, Mr Richardson held his own press conference last week. He said; "I am increasingly convinced that cot deaths are caused by the toxic gases in the mattress material in this country. If this cause is eliminated then cot deaths will disappear. I believe my findings to be consistent with all the known features of cot deaths... The gases we have identified are 1,000 times more toxic than carbon monoxide."

In a recent letter to Dr K.C. Calman, chief medical officer for the Department of Health, Mr Richardson pointed out that the level of SIDS in Britain prior to the introduction of fire retardants and other additives was 0.1 percent and this is now the position in Japan where phosphorous arsenic and antimony are not permitted in infant mattresses. He asked for "more consistent action by government organisations; for



example the toxic hazards involved in the introduction of the Furniture and Furnishings Regulations 1988 by the Department of Trade and Industry were not realistically assessed and the extensions of the regulations to nursery furnishings result in exposure of infants to direct toxic hazards that I have identified."

At last week's press conference, Mr Ron Jones, director-general of the British Plastics Federation, which cooperated fully with the government investigation, asked for further dialogue between Mr Richardson and the Department of Health as they were "confused".

The health department had been invited to the conference but was not present. A spokesman told me: "There was no need for us to be present — the results of our findings were announced in June and our views have not changed. We are ourselves launching a campaign in two weeks' time on babies sleeping positions." Did the campaign have anything to do with the content of mattresses? "No, nothing whatsoever — although further work is going on."

Mr Brown, who is also managing director of manufacturers TOMY, said: "There are no government guidelines on what can be put into mattresses — it's crazy. It's extraordinary that the Government should allow such potentially lethal chemicals into mattresses in such stark contrast to the government directives on toys."

HAVING first fuelled Britain's bingo-style housing boom and then engineered the catastrophic slump in the property market that is still with us, the Government, via its agents in the Department of Social Security, is now telling people how big a house they should own.

The Douglas family from Sussex put down a £40,000 deposit and took on a hefty £125,000 mortgage to buy a house for £165,000. Two years later, like many others, Mr Douglas was made redundant from his well-paid job and was forced to claim benefit to help him live and pay his mortgage.

He realised the amount was high, but was nonetheless taken aback to receive a curt missive from the Department of Social Security: "In deciding how much Income Support people get, the full weekly amount for eligible housing costs are normally included. Housing costs like mortgage interests are usually included in Income Support. However, the adjudication officer has decided that your housing costs are too high. This is because your home is unnecessarily large for you."

The DSS then told Mr Douglas there was "no reason why you should not be expected to look for alternative, cheaper accommodation." With houses and flats sitting unsold on the market for two or even three years, this is helpful advice indeed.

Sporting Life

AT THIS time of year the wax jacket and shooting stick brigade keep assuring everyone that jump racing is real racing, that jump jockeys are real men and that it's only flat racing enthusiasts, the pallid urban sophisticates, who are more interested in money than sport. This heroic spirit of idealism seemed to be perfectly illustrated by Scots jockey Peter Niven's celebrated five-timer at Kelso on 5 October.

It now appears the reason Niven was unable to make it six wins in a row was not due to bureaucratic local stewarding, as reported at the time, but as a result of some rather elastic interpretations of the Corinthian ethos by a couple of his professional colleagues.

After Niven's 52-1 accumulator in the first five races, the Kelso stewards supposedly intervened to prevent him riding Rawaan, the 2-7 favourite and subsequent 20-length winner of the last, even though Rawaan's listed jockey Graham McCourt had apparently agreed to give up the ride.

If Niven had been allowed to take the mount he would have become the first jockey in history to go through the card on a six-race programme. But after McCourt was declared as Rawaan's rider 45 minutes before race time, the Kelso stewards' secretary William Nunneley apparently insisted that rules were rules and could not be bent in Niven's favour. Afterwards McCourt was quoted as feeling as "sick as a parrot... I've never enjoyed riding a winner less," he told hacks.

Rawaan is owned by that colourful organisation Full Circle Thoroughbreds, represented at Kelso by their usual spokesman, our old friend Colin Tinkler senior. McCourt claimed he'd tried to get hold of Tinkler before declaration time to get his permission to give up the ride but that Tinkler "didn't appear until five minutes after the deadline". Tinkler's version is that he would have been happy to switch jockeys provided "Peter paid Graham his expenses and prize money cut", but that the stewards had the last word. Yet sources close to both Niven and former jockey Geordie Dun, who was an acting steward, suggest that for once officialdom was not to blame.

The new betting-oriented magazine *Odds On* correctly deduced that there might be more to the story and ran a piece in its November issue suggesting that Rawaan's trainer, Nigel Tinkler, had requested a "present" from Niven and that this had been the real stumbling block. *Odds On* was on the right track but had the wrong Tinkler. Further investigation indicates that it was Colin Tinkler who felt a "drink" was in order, one to the value of £500, that Tinkler senior was around well before declaration time and that McCourt was aware of his "negotiating position".

What's more, McCourt's fulsome expressions of distress sit uneasily with Niven's recollections that McCourt felt that a £500 drink was in order for him too, over and above his prize money share and riding fee, but not to include an additional £250 bill for his expenses.

Sadly for Tinkler and McCourt, Niven, a sensible Scot, decided that more than £1,250 was too high a price even for a chance to make history, and told them both to stuff it. Rawaan connections are now trying to vent their frustration on the terrified publisher of *Odds On*, David Ikerran.

'Major Bonkers'

FOOTBALL NEWS

ARSENAL, which won the league championships last season and is currently Britain's most successful football club, is having less success off the field with its current PR campaign.

Its plans to seat 13,000 fans in a new £16m cantilevered stand at the northern end of the ground and to make its magnificent stadium, the largest in the country, all-seater have angered everyone — and not just the nancy boys in the world of architecture.

Those who regularly stand on the club's popular North Bank claim they're being ripped-off to finance the refurbishment. Instead of paying admission, match by match (currently £8) to watch Arsenal perform at home, the club is asking fans who propose to use the new North Bank stand from 1993 to cough up either £1,300 or £1,500 *now* to join a debenture scheme, the Arsenal Bond.

The lucky bond-holder then gets his, her or its name engraved on a seat and a 10-year guarantee to obtain annual season tickets at an "attractive" price. Unsurprisingly, the scheme has not been over-subscribed and with football goers up and down the country beginning to question the received wisdom of Lord Justice Taylor's excessive all-seater proposals following the Hillsborough disaster, many are claiming Arsenal has gone too far.

● *See 'Piloti'*

"Yes, he certainly has the sweetest left foot I've ever seen, Brian..."

TOTTENHAM THREE

THE grudging admission by the appeal court that none of the Tottenham Three should ever have been convicted has — predictably — led to more talk of the British criminal justice system being "in crisis".

The lefty establishment is naturally baying for the blood of the policeman who led the investigation and fitted up Winston Silcott: Det Chief Supt Graham Melvin. Although vigorously defended by police sources as impeccably "clean", there is at least one skeleton in his cupboard, as the family and friends of James Davey can testify.

In 1983, the then detective superintendent took a team of detectives to Coventry to interview Davey in connection with the gangland slaying of Paddy "Onions" O'Nione. When the Met officers arrived, there was a scuffle. Davey, held in a headlock for eight minutes by a detective sergeant, choked and died. Under cross-examination at the inquest, Melvin admitted that his statement about the incident was "remarkably thin on the ground".

Fortunately his memory was firing on all cylinders at the time of the Blakelock murder trial in 1987. He remembered so well that the notes made of the Silcott interview were complete and contemporaneous, that he swore to it on the witness stand.

Melvin is extraordinarily arrogant — even for a high ranking copper. He told the Essex officers interviewing him: "Apparently, the media have already convicted me." Despite being obviously guilty, he refused the smart option adopted by his junior colleague, Det Insp Maxwell Dingle. Dingle — who actually made the notes during the sessions with Silcott — took a lawyer to the interview with Essex police and refused to answer any questions.

Dingle also chose discretion over valour when the news about the results of the ESDA tests broke over the summer. Within a few days he had quit the force. It remains to be seen whether his footwork was fleet enough to escape the consequences of his actions.

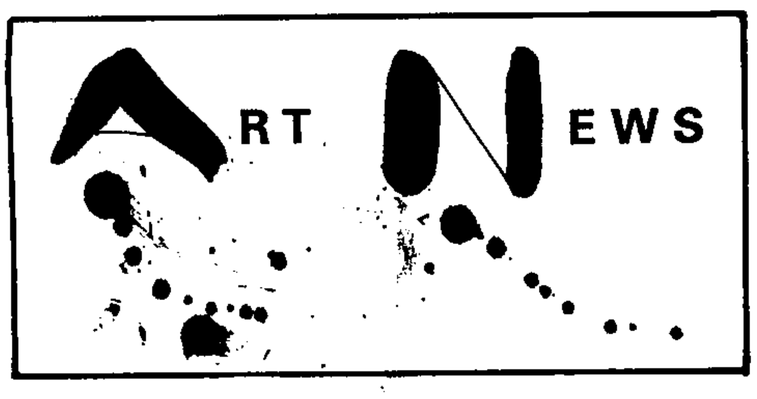
But perhaps the media witch hunt should begin with Roy Amlot, the prosecutor, and the man responsible for the decision to charge Engin Raghip with murder. Engin had "confessed" — after five days of interrogation — to hanging around on the edge of the crowd around Blakelock's body, carrying a broom handle.

He was originally charged with affray, although the trial judge later described his offence as amounting to little more than attempted common assault. Some weeks later, on orders from the DPP's office, he was rearrested. Amlot had twigged that Engin could be charged with murder under the legal doctrine of "joint enterprise".

The identical doctrine in South Africa is called "common purpose". As Mr Amlot might recall, there was something of an international outcry when it was used to convict the Sharpeville Six.

There are some politicians who are culpable, too. Like perhaps David Mellor, the Tory MP and former Home Office minister, who used to send rude letters to constituents tiresome enough to write to him about the case.

Or maybe Roy Hattersley, the opposition spokesthing on such matters. Fattersley never said a word about the convictions and flatly refused to meet the families of the men, even after the referral of the case to the Court of Appeal.



ART WORLD pundits are eagerly watching Cork Street, mecca of London's contemporary art trade, to see who will be the next dealer to bite the dust in the current financial collapse of this overblown marketplace.

Odds on favourite is the curious Israeli banker's daughter, Iraqi-born Odette Gilbert (real name Odette Sofair), a first cousin to Charles Saatchi, the man who revolutionised the contemporary art business in Britain with his "kid in a sweet shop" style of collecting.

Sultry Ms Gilbert changed her name after beginning a relationship with ex-Inland Revenue solicitor Rodney Gilbert, with whom she has a son, Toby. Since Gilbert Esq was given the boot from their Tudor mansion near Gatwick, Odette has changed the name of her company back to Sofer (sic) at Companies House and has been locked in acrimonious litigation with the luckless Rodders for the last two years.

It came as a surprise to Mr Gilbert then, banned from the delectable dealer's life for some time now, to receive a demand on 8 November from the Cork Street gallery's landlords, Tyne & Wear County Superannuation Fund, for unpaid rent of £20,000 under an old guarantee agreement. The parlous state of Odette's business is also seen to be reflected in the new association she has formed with her ex-con brother, Isaac Sofair, whose wife Joan has been working in the gallery of late.

Failed property developer Isaac is best remembered in the art world for blaming his cousin, Charles Saatchi, for his misfortune in being hauled into court on deception charges in November 1990. (Also for once being shot at in Hyde Park by disgruntled business acquaintances — but that's another story.)

Arrested for obtaining loans totalling £315,000 from Landhurst Leasing against a selection of classic cars for which he had manufactured forged documents claiming ownership, Sofair astounded Judge Carter QC by asserting that had his cousin (Saatchi) not given him a "hot tip" to buy shares in Excellent Securities, which subsequently bombed, he would not have had to con Landhurst out of the cash and fake the documents of valuable cars belonging to a mysterious family called Karani. Saatchi's alleged "hot tip" saw Sofair's £400,000 investment dip to £30,000 almost overnight.

Court records also note that Sofair made over a property in Tiberias, Israel, to his sister, Odette, in order that she might make an expensive painting available in London to be sold to pay his debts. Despite Odette's simpering appearance in court, none of which cut any ice with Judge Carter, Isaac was sent down for two and a half years.

Paintings and Odette are an inflammatory mix. Recently she appeared before the high court in an action brought by American dealer Tim Foley over a Lucian Freud painting, which resulted in her being branded by Mr Justice Hodgson as a woman who told "a pack of lies" to the court and cost her in the region of £300,000.

Rodney Gilbert, meanwhile, wonders how the Cork Street siren manages to get legal aid to continue hammering him in the courts, when she has the Israeli property, the Sussex tudor mansion, a Porsche 911 and house in Victoria Square let out to diplomats, and is financing huge bank and trade debts.

THE DERANGED behaviour of self-styled American art dealer Ira Gale knows no bounds. If famous for anything other than tricking well known dealers out of their wares (*Eye* 775), it is for his apparent immunity from Inspector Knacker and the forces of law and order.

Gale has now resurfaced in Cork Street and the newly-arrived Raab Gallery, the London branch of the prestigious Berlin operation, is his new target. Last month he forced his way into its stockroom but was ejected by staff. There followed a series of telephone threats to the gallery director, Basaam Boukamel, who arrived one morning to find black paint over his front windows and his door locks superglued. More telephone calls from Gale identified the madman as the culprit.

At a private view soon after, Gale appeared among the guests raving about the incident and admitting his part in it. Unbeknown to him plain clothes police officers were among the throng and Gale was promptly arrested, loudly threatening the Raab staff as he was marched off to Savile Row. After smashing a police radio Gale went up before the beak and, after roundly abusing the same and refusing to be bound over, spent seven days in the slammer.

The Raab Gallery is now forced to hire a permanent security man to avoid any chance of the maniac breaking in and assaulting staff. They and others wonder why, despite West End Central having a file on Gale as long as your arm, Knacker continually refuses to remove this menace from the streets of London.

Letters

A nation mourns...

Sir,

I wonder if the editors of PRIVATE EYE *have heard of a journal produced by the Nazi, Julius Streicher, called* DER STURMER, *in which he aired the sadistic and anti-semitic mania of the Nazi period.*

Your edition "The Nation Mourns" on Robert Maxwell, with its vile cover, could well have been one of Streicher's anti-semitic ravings.

Yours in disgust,
JOHN GOLD,

London SW14.

Sir,

Thanks for a wonderful latest edition, especially the Maxwell and Lockerbie material (brilliant cover!)

I've been a subscriber for about 14 years, and am a very satisfied customer.

Please keep up the wonderful work.

All best wishes,
ALAN PHILLIPS.

Sir,

In response to the predictable "You've gone too far, I'm cancelling my subscription after 9000 years..." fools who'll get upset over your equally predictable dead Maxwell cover I'd like to say I couldn't care less.

What does bother me (like the chap I've just read in this week's Letters) is that the proportion of your magazine dedicated to tedious sniping at the terminally dieting publishing tycoon over past months and probably years is becoming more distressing than anything the man himself managed to do.

Your obsession with raking up anything at all to slag him off means that THE EUROPEAN *is in danger of becoming the second least boring publication in the world after your own plummeting publication.*

PATRICK THORNE,

Kiltarlity, Inverness-shire.

Sir,

Your front cover depicting the burial of Capt Bob was in the worst possible taste.

Please consider my subscription renewed.

Yours faithfully,
CHRIS PHILLIPS,

Bath.

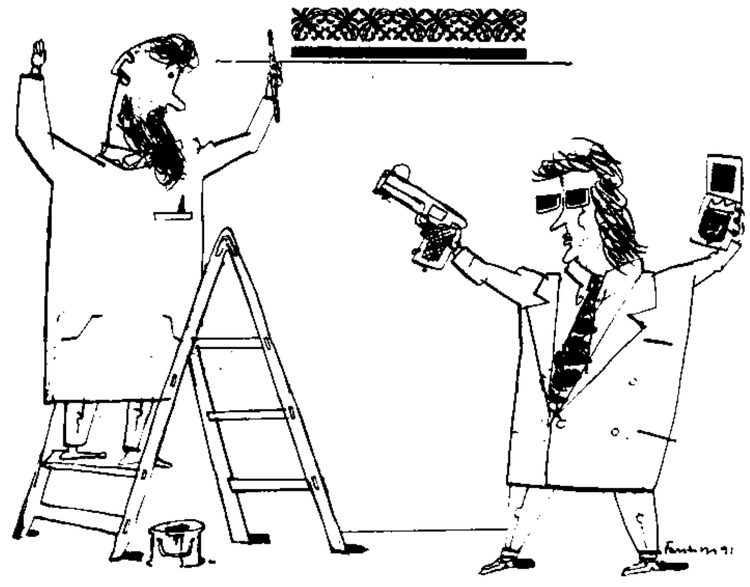
Sir,

As an annual subscriber over many years, I was saddened by the tasteless, over the top and extremely unfunny send off which you gave to Robert Maxwell. Typical of you, I suppose, to bravely attack a dead man.

In future, you can poke PRIVATE EYE *right back where it obviously comes from!*

MALCOLM BARRY,

Crawley, West Sussex.



"Frieze!"

Sir,

In anticipation of the many protests, subscription cancellations and general criticism that you have undoubtedly received recently, I must speak in defence of PRIVATE EYE, *and the devotion of much of last issue's "Bye" to the sad demise of Mr Robert Maxwell. The reasons for this are as follows:*

1. Maxwell was "a liar, a cheat and a bully". Had he, in fact, been a philanthropist who cured the sick, donated large sections of his wealth to charity, and ran soup kitchens for the poor and needy, then more genuine praise would have been written in the obituary columns, and not the sycophantic default phrases bandied around in the crocodile tear-stained pages of the media shortly after his death.

2. Maxwell bullied most of his enemies into cowardice (as well as most of the British press). Those who did have the guts to print a hint of the truth were immobilised by writs and legal actions. Far from the cowardly act of "Libelling a Dead Man", it was more of a case of "Now Letting the Truth Be Known". The fact that the EYE *managed to publish as much as it did before his death is a testimony to its resilience in the face of libel actions.*

3. Maxwell's business empire was, like much of the so-called "boom" of the late eighties, based on credit, corruption, and ultimately doomed to collapse. Like the flimsy canopy of a balloon, it was kept afloat by hot-air, mostly his. It will be interesting to see how long Kevin and Ian are able to struggle at the helm of their respective corporations before everything falls apart.

4. What was PRIVATE EYE *supposed to print? "Maxwell was a saint tragically robbed of life at the peak of his fitness and career in a freak yachting accident"? Get real. I cannot help referring to the tombstone inscription in Stephen King's novel* STARK: *Here lies Robert Maxwell/Died, November 9th, 1991/Not a very nice man.*

Yours faithfully,
MARK THORNTON,

Selly Park, Birmingham.

Sir,

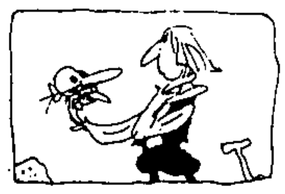
*Re: OBN Special (*EYE *781)*

To do Anne Robinson some justice, she did also write that Maxwell was "a bully" and that like all bullies he came into his own when dealing with cowards. Strong stuff in the late great man's own paper, which had just been inherited by one of his sons, the very day after his death. Some of his employees have bollocks and don't just write them. Some of your readers also read the MIRROR; *and, dare I say it, some of your journalists (ie, Paul Foot) still consider the* MIRROR *a good enough "paper in which to write a regular column".*

By the way, wasn't his last trick brilliant? Dying just after PRIVATE EYE *had gone to press, so that you had to wait a whole fortnight to cover the event! But you've got to admit, his whole life was exactly like a novel — trouble is, one by Jeffrey Archer.*

Yours faithfully,
RALPH LLOYD-JONES,

London SE22.



LUVVIES

"For drama, I'm afraid you simply can't beat sport. I saw Omar, whom I hadn't seen for years, at David Lean's memorial service. He loves sport as much as me, and we were both completely engrossed in the Ryder Cup. I was silent for days. He said he was in tears. No play on earth can deliver that sort of thing. Sport's much better."

TOM COURTENAY
Sunday Times

Sir Peter Hall described Dame Peggy [Ashcroft] as "the mainstay, the foundation stone, the conscience, the support of the Royal Shakespeare Company".

She was, he said, "terribly, terribly English yet wonderfully, elusively foreign; chaste, but wonderfully, passionately sexy".

Independent

Submitted by E. Strobes, Anon.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 for contributions.

Water tight theory

Sir,

What a field day the so-called pundits have had following the death of Cap'n Bob. The PLO have been cited. Mossad (as if the Israelis would bump off one of their more generous supporters), the CIA and other sundry shadowy organisations.

*To round it off, Bob Caldicott (*EYE *781) suggests that some "secret agent" used a special KGB "heart attack" gas. May I respectfully suggest to both him and other paranoid types that they are all victims of "Pratt Gas", a sinister Russian weapon that is released by high level aircraft, into the prevailing winds over the UK, its effect being to scramble the brain into making outrageous statements.*

My own theory is that an old, highly overweight and over-stressed man awoke early, not feeling too well. He went out, unclothed, as may have been his wont on his own yacht, in the middle of nowhere. There is no mystery about his alleged fateful route, let's face it, it was his yacht and he walked where and how he bloody well liked, even closing the door for a change.

He may have leaned over the side (as many people feeling unwell are wont to do on board ship). He then suffered a heart attack and with the combination of the pain and the fact that he was more than a little top-heavy, pitched forward over the side.

Either that or the aliens who made the corn circles were angry at the MIRROR *not taking their attempts at communication seriously. They then zapped him from an invisible flying saucer hovering over the boat (Look out Rupert, you're next).*

Personally I prefer the latter theory as it holds about as much water as Mr Caldicott's and others' theories and is far more newsworthy.

Cynically yours,
JEREMY ZEID,

Harrow, Middx.

Bird's nest

Sir,

As a longtime former foreign correspondent, I do happen to know the whereabouts of Tenerife and various African republics.

But as for former staff journalist Sandie Laming's £1,000 a month retainer in the Canaries, I can assure you that I was not instrumental in that arrangement or even consulted about it. (Street of Shame, 22 November.)

Neither is Tenerife my favourite holiday spot!

Yours faithfully,
PAUL CONNEW,

Deputy Editor, News of the World, London E1.

No arson about

Sir,

I am writing on behalf of the "brilliant brains who run Bovis" to point out the inaccuracies in your story regarding fires on our sites.

The source of the story is clearly an article which appeared in BUILDING *magazine on 1 November and sadly you have perpetuated the errors made in that article.*

The fire at Minster Court in August 1991 took place in a building being fitted out by Laings. It had been handed over to Laings by Bovis in October 1990. There have been no fires on the Bovis site at Liverpool Street and the total cost of fire damage at Broadgate and the Langham Hotel was £30 million not £50 million. The causes of the fires on both those sites have been identified and it wasn't arson.

In the last paragraph of your story you have chosen to embroider an anonymous quote originally used in BUILDING *magazine, supposedly from a Bovis source. No one in Bovis has at any time made any such suggestion to* BUILDING *magazine, nor to* PRIVATE EYE, *because there is absolutely no substance to the story.*

BUILDING *magazine has now acknowledged the errors in its article and is carrying a correction next week. Perhaps you might like to do the same!*

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW BOND,

Head of Public Relations, Bovis Ltd, London SW1.

Practising safe seats

Sir,

When Ramsay Macdonald lost Seaham in 1935 he was no longer Prime Minister. Stanley Baldwin was. Moreover, Ramsay Mac's majority in 1931 had been 5,000, so the seat was quite easy for Labour to win back. Macdonald had represented quite a variety of seats since his parliamentary career began: Leicester 1906-18; Aberavon 1922-29; and then Seaham. His last constituency was to be combined Scottish Universities, and his candidacy for Seaham was thought controversial because he was a friend of Lord Londonderry, who owned collieries in the area.

Kinnock's majority in Islwyn last time was 22,000. It would take a 28.4 percent swing to get him out, and he has been MP for that part of South Wales since 1970.

I expect Kinnock to stay MP for Islwyn, whatever his chances of getting into Number Ten.

Yours faithfully,
T.B.L. CARTER,

Somerton, Somerset.

Lookalike

Duke

Haider

Sir,

I wonder whether other readers have noticed the remarkable resemblance between the ex-Ku Klux Klan Republican candidate in Louisiana, David Duke, and Förg Haider, leader of Austria's ultra right-wing "Freedom" Party.

Could they by any chance be related? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
JANE LANGLEY,

London N1.

I-SPY *Vermont*

Submitted by Paul Braithwaite. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of phbtographs. No transparencies.)*

Holo victory

Sir,

Paul Butler's comparison of the Holocaust with road deaths (Letters, EYE *781) is, to say the least, questionable. He argues that public connivance is the common element and he may have a point there. But the Holocaust was murder. Death on the roads is not. By ignoring this elemental moral distinction he is guilty, at best, of straining his analogy and, at worst, of insulting the millions of Jews and non-Jews slaughtered by the Nazis.*

I wonder how much Mr Butler actually knows about the Holocaust? His remarks about 1930s Germany suggest that he has got the death camps mixed up with the pre-Holocaust Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany. Again, the distinction is fundamental and cannot be glossed over.

It is tempting to exploit the Holocaust and its victims as a source of debating points about human evil. Those rash enough to enter this difficult terrain should be careful drivers, not joyriders.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY TAYLOR,

Glasgow.

Well developed

Sir,

May I point out a small inaccuracy in your otherwise perfect edition No 781. Your HP SAUCE section stated that Wallasey is held by "Foreign Minister Linda Chalker". In fact Lynda Chalker is the Minister for Overseas Development. (I know this as I write to her asking for more aid and less bombs for third world countries.)

Yours, not expecting to get this published,
PAUL O'HANLON,

Runcorn.

Deep trout

Sir,

John L. Bisson (Letters, 22 November) should rest assured there is no connection between the mysterious death of Cap'n Bob and the killing of the millionaire owner of a luxurious yacht in THE HILDEBRAND VARIETY *a short story featured in* FOR YOUR EYES ONLY.

The millionaire killed off in James Bond's presence was killed by someone stuffing an exotic and very rare species of tropical fish down his throat and choking him.

I doubt any fish large enough to choke the Cap'n (white shark/killer whale, etc) could be handled easily enough to stuff down his throat without waking him, and he would probably have swallowed it anyway.

Yours faithfully,
MR R.K. WADFORTH,

London E9.

Fruit fool

Sir,

*Congratulations to my friend and former student Graham Caveney on making his first appearance in Pseuds' Corner (*EYE *781), but a loud raspberry to the waggish prankster (shurely "prattish wanker"?) who sent the item in under my name.*

We are all pseuds under the skin and it would take more than a measly tenner to tempt me into sneaking on one of my fellow- critics.

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN COE,

London SW10.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"This replica of the Santa Maria — what does it look like?"
JOHN TIDMARSH, BBC World Service
(E.P. Churchill)

"It's been a night of frustration. United can't find an end to the cul-de-sac."
ALAN PARRY, ITV
(Ciaran Dunne)

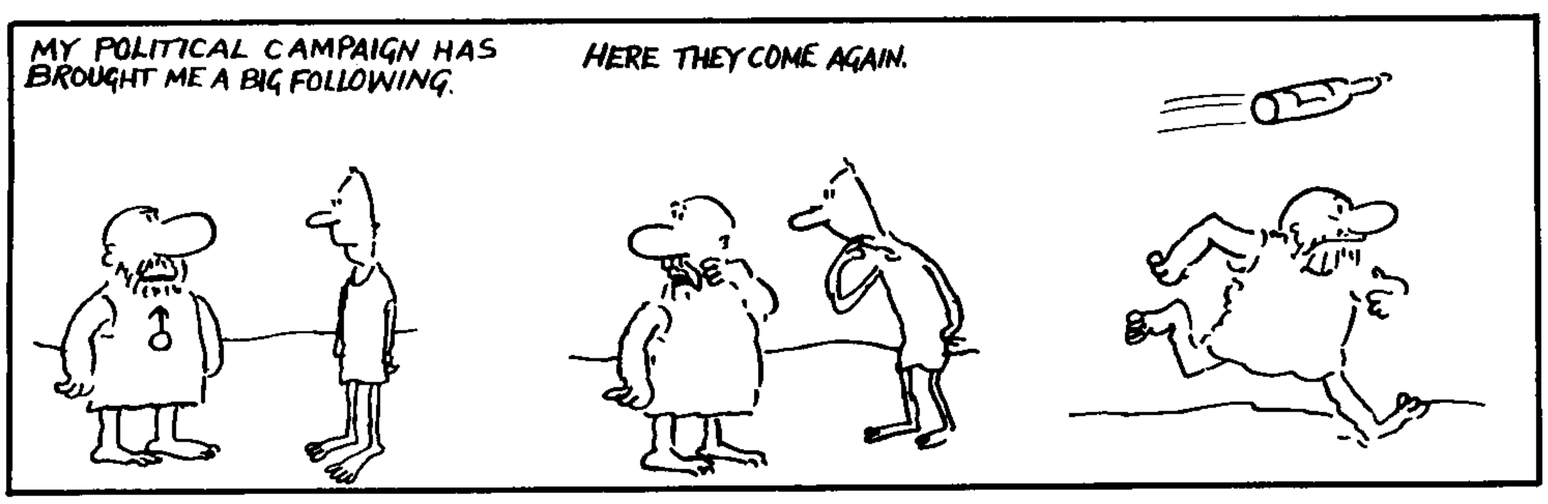
"The 16th-century four-poster bed was originally owned by Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithfull."
TOMMY PUETT, ITV
(R.J. Ward)

Simon Bates: *"You say that your first language was Gaelic. Do you mean that Gaelic was the language you spoke before you learned to speak English?"*
Interviewee: *"Yes."*
SIMON BATES, Radio 1
(Kim Singer)

"The day is coming when Rangers will be looking over their shoulder and wondering how we [Celtic FC] got so far ahead."
TERRY CASSIDY, "The Glaswegian"
(William Barr)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from Hong Kong

from Our Own Correspondent

HAVING settled the fate of Hong Kong, our undemocratic, self-appointed leaders in the colony have turned their jaundiced gaze on the diminished rump of the UK's civil liberties.

Headed by the lamest of lame ducks, governor Sir David Wilson, hero of the Tianenmen apologists, they are trying to rid the British legal system of *habeas corpus*.

It may be that the reputation of our legal system is at an all time low, but some in the colony clearly believe it can sink still lower. A sledgehammer is being used to crack the tiny, but immensely irritating nut called Lorrain Osman, the 60-year-old Malaysian businessman and ex-Bumiputra finance chief spending his sixth year on remand in London facing extradition to stand trial in the Carrian affair, an amazingly complex and unpleasant case in which $500 million went missing from a government bank (see *Eyes passim*).

With its embarrassing political ramifications, it is little wonder that attempts to settle the case are being resisted. *Habeas corpus* is the last and most powerful citizen's protection against a corrupt executive — and a corrupt executive is something Sir David Wilson knows all about.

His one-time director of public prosecutions, Warwick Reid, is serving eight years for corruption. Other members of the Hong Kong legal department have been accused of handling false passports and guns trying to help Reid escape the attentions of Hong Kong's "Gestapo", the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC).

It was Reid who compiled what evidence there is against Osman, and who arranged immunity for the only crown witness, Ibrahim Jaafar, without whom there would be no case. It comes as no surprise to Asia watchers that Jaafar, who has confessed to taking massive bribes, has now admitted that he has lied to everyone about the case. It's no surprise that Jaafar's immunities have not been withdrawn.

Neither is it unexpected that more than 60 percent of the evidence that Reid put together has been "lost or destroyed". Even the high court may balk at overturning *habeas corpus*; but having covered itself in glory in the Irish cases, it seems determined to maintain its reputation. Myopia is still a requirement for the bench, as Lord Justices Mann, Parker, Leggatt and Woolf have illustrated in steadfastly refusing to examine inconvenient facts about Osman's case.

The facts ignored include Jaafar's confirmed status, by the Hong Kong high court, as a brazen liar; the confirmation that Malaysia's ex-minister of finance, who started the prosecution, received multi-mullion bribes from the key figure in the case; the disappearance of 3,500 documents; and clear evidence of direct Malaysian political interference.

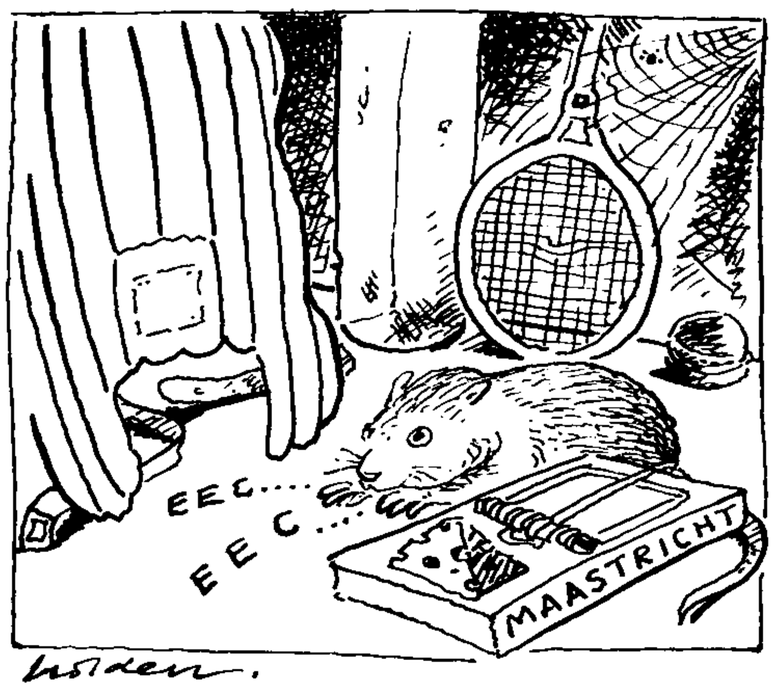
Acute myopia took over in the high court when it decided that documents which were passed to Osman's defence team by a hapless Foreign Office clerk did not really exist. Osman's claim that the case is politically inspired was supported by ex-Hong Kong governor Sir Edward Youde in a confidential cable in 1985 to the then Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe. But what the Foreign Office giveth, the Foreign Office can take away — by a public interest certificate, signed by Francis Maude MP, which included more than 100 confidential documents. The documents highlighted the role of Sir David Gillmore GCMG, now head of the diplomatic service, who was high commissioner of Malaysia in 1983-86.

When it received the Maude document, the court confirmed the certificate, which in its eyes meant the documents did not exist, and then blamed Osman for relying on them when they had been freely given to his lawyers by the Foreign Office!

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

A very delightful surprise greeted me when I arrived home this evening from the House (of Parliament — not my house, obviously, or I could not have returned from there!). Anyway, there was no sign of Norman and all the lights were off. Luckily I had my pencil torch-and-screwdriver set in my top pocket, so I immediately went to the fuse-box which is in the cupboard under the stairs where I keep such



useful items as my old cricket pads. When I opened the door, however, who should I find but Norma Lamont with his new research assistant, "Oh, hullo, Prime Minister," he said, "we were hoping to surprise you rather than the other way about." At that moment there was a lot of giggling and the whole cabinet came out of hiding, all wearing paper hats except for Mr Hurd. My friend David Mellor explained that he and Chris had planned a special party to celebrate my first year as Prime Minister. They had even laid on a big cake with one candle on it, to commemorate all my, by no means inconsiderable, achievements. There was a rather clever message on top of the cake — A YEAR WITHOUT THE OLD BAT — a reference no doubt to my well-known love of cricket! The party went on till all hours and it must have been at least half-past nine before I got to bed.

Tuesday

Today is my big day, when I have to tell the House of Commons exactly where I stand on the famous Maastricht negotiations. Mr Hurd was very kind and gave me a 15-page outline of what I should say. He had guessed my thoughts so accurately that I didn't have to change a single word. The best bit (what Mr O'Donnell called "a great sound-bite") was where I said: "We have built the station. The train has left. It is high time we got on board, unless we decide to get off." When I said this in the House of Commons they all cheered except you-know-who, who spoilt the effect by getting up and making a very long speech which nobody listened to. I feel quite sorry for her, really.

Wednesday

It was in no small measure irritating when I read in the papers a whole lot of headlines such as e.g. MAGGIE KOs FEEBLE MAJOR and THATCHER'S REFERENDUM CALL — LET MY PEOPLE CHOOSE. I cannot think why the newspapers pay so much attention to what Mrs Thatcher says, when she is not even Prime Minister any longer. I certainly don't, which I immediately proved by asking Mr O'Donnell to tell all the papers that there is definitely not going to be a referendum. This should leave no one in any doubt as to whom is in charge, and should shut her up once and for all.

Thursday

Imagine my surprise when I turned on the television at lunchtime to see Mrs Thatcher once again holding forth, and actually having the cheek to say that I was "arrogant" not to go along with her referendum idea. Quite clearly she is, as usual, totally out of touch with what ordinary people think. And as for her calling people "arrogant", well I am speechless, is all I can say. "I feel quite sick," I told Norman, who immediately went off to ring up her friend at *Hello* magazine.

Friday

The newspapers have once again got it all wrong. They have brought out an opinion poll which says that 87 per cent of the public are in favour of Mrs Thatcher's referendum scheme. How can ordinary people be expected to understand something as complicated as the Common Currency and European Monetary Union? Even I don't understand it, and I am Prime Minister (unlike some people I can think of!).

Saturday

Today it has been decided that as part of my schedule I should be seen relaxing at a football match with my friend David Mellor. The game was in Chelsea and David and I were lucky enough to get very good seats, right next to where all the photographers were sitting. While I was enjoying the game, I couldn't help thinking how bad Mrs Thatcher was at relaxing, and how much better I am at doing it. Watching sport, in my judgement, is a good way to take your mind off politics. When I made this point to David, he said: "Shut up, John, the Blues have just scored." It is interesting, I thought, that Chelsea have exactly the same colours, i.e. blue, as the Conservative Party. Perhaps, I said to David, this is a good omen for the next election. Unfortunately

he was distracted as the other side had scored twice and won the game.

Monday

A very successful dinner party was held last night in my honour. A number of Asian businessmen had very kindly organised a grand celebration at Number Ten to commemorate my first year in office. I said to my friend Chris that this would show once and for all that the Conservatives were in no way racialist and that we have the full support of the ethnic minorities. "Quite right," said Chris. "We will take money from anyone."

I did not understand this but assumed he meant that these businessmen and their shops provided a valuable late-night service with groceries etcetera.

This was perhaps why Mr Patten made a number of references in his speech to credit cards being accepted or cheques

being taken provided there was a number written on the back.

Some of the businessmen clearly misunderstood him and took out huge wads of money and asked questions about the honours list.

In my judgement, these people still have much to learn.

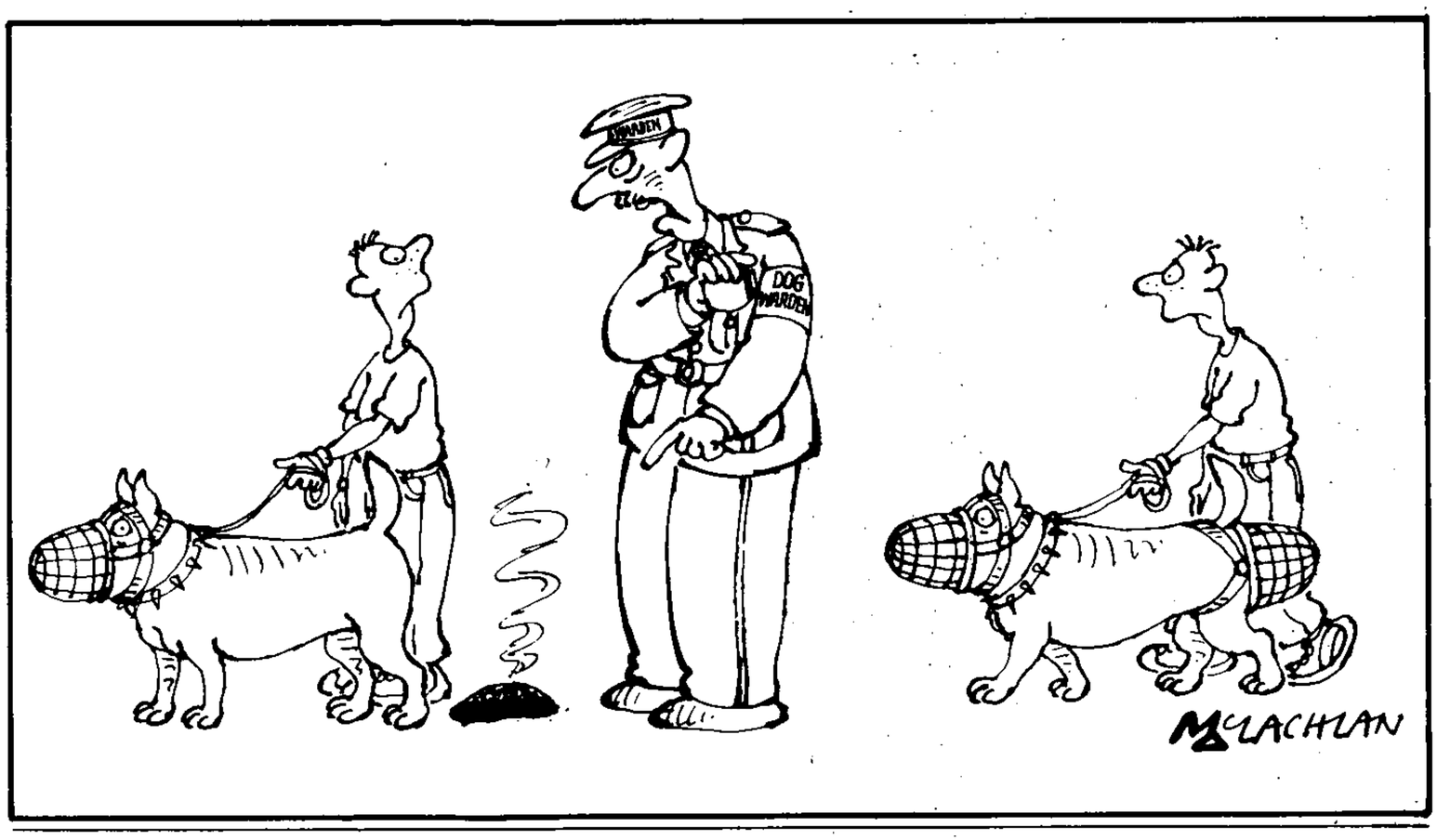
Tuesday

Mr Lamont brings good news about our negotiations with the EEC. Apparently we don't have to opt out of the common currency after all! We have also secured another important concession. The Queen's head will continue to be on our coins and banknotes. For example, the 5-ecu piece will have the EEC symbol on one side and the head of Jacques Delors on the other. This is what happens when there are tough negotiations!

And there will be more. As I said to the Cabinet: "It is hard pounding." Mr Waldegrave added: "But not hard ecuing then?" All the others laughed, which was very considerably annoying given the gravity of the situation.

Talking of troublemakers, I have told Mrs Thatcher on the phone that she is to keep out of the limelight during the run-up to the General Election. "You can rely on me," she said with a slight laugh, which was clearly a nervous reaction to my admonishment.

I am sure this has done the trick.



KNACKER — 'CHILDREN MUST BE HEARD'

by our Crime Staff
Lunchtime O'Buse

IN THE wake of the recent child abuse trial, Inspector Knacker of the Yard has issued new guidelines to prevent a repeat of the notorious Beck abuse case ever happening again.

"The evidence of children must be listened to and given greater credence by the police and the courts. Children do not make up these stories."

Inspector Knacker then announced that there would be no prosecution of Mr Greville Janner on the grounds of insufficient evidence. "You cannot trust a single word these boys say," he added.

Asked about his future, Mr Janner commented: "I'll be buggered if I resign".

TV CHOICE

9.00 Kingsley and the Women

Trouble starts when Kingsley, an elderly novelist, goes mad as a result of watching an adaptation of one of his books. He feels surrounded by women producers, directors and actors and ends up taking to the bottle. *Eye rating: z-z-z-z-z.*

10.00 An Appeal on Behalf of Alcoholics Anonymous by Kingshley Amish

(That'sh enough TV. Ed.)

GLENDA SLAGG

Fleet Street's Finest

TERRY WAITE — aren'tcha sick of him? Coming back and preaching at us all as if he was some sort of saint!?!

Everybody knows that, behind his holier-than-thou dog-collar, Old Tel was no more than a CIA agent, a-wheelin' and a-dealin' with the blood-stained mullahs of Iran?!?

Shove off, Beardy, and leave us all in peace! That's Auntie Glenda's Christmas Mess-age!??!

HANDS OFF Terry Waite?!?? Give him a break, for gawd's sake!?

If anyone is a saint today, it must be this 6-foot 10-inch hunk of Christian goodwill, with his sexy beard and his soft, caring eyes??!?!

Yet no sooner has that huggable hostage stepped off that plane than the Fleet Street hyenas are a-snipin' and a-gripin', calling him a gun-runner and a CIA agent.

It makes you stark staring sick?!!

SO the churches are empty this Christmas.

And no wonder, when you've got old four-eyes Carey in charge, a-moanin' and a-groanin' from his pulpit?!?

What we need is a real Christian like Terry Waite!? Archbishop Terry — that would pack 'em into the pews!?!

TERRY WAITE — aren'tcha sick of him?!??

Every time you turn on the telly, there he *(You've done this piece. Ed.)*

HERE they are — Glenda's Christmas Hamper Hunks of the Month!?!

RUUD LUBBERS. He's the handsome Hollander who's rockin' 'em all in the aisles at Maastricht. I wouldn't mind setting my Dutch Cap at him any day?!? Geddit?

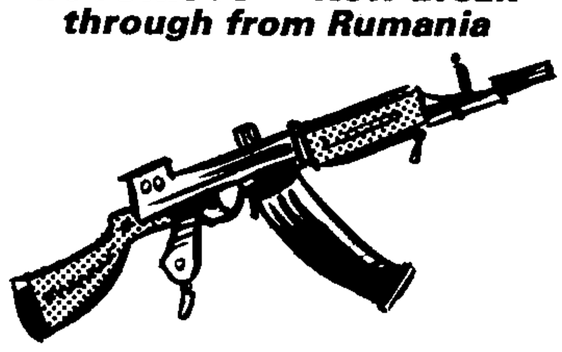
KEVIN AND IAN MAXWELL. Two's company, but three's lots of fun?!?? Geddit?

MANGOSUTU BUTHELEZI. Crazy name, crazy guy??!?

Byeeeeeeee!!!

GNOME'S XMA

MOTORISTS — New Break-through from Rumania



Say goodbye to irritating 'Baby On Board' stickers with the ex-Stasi, one-blast

KALASHNI-KID WINDSCREEN TERMINATOR

Neatly "takes out" sticker, windscreen, driver and baby. Comes with CD plates.

Price: £38,975 ***(ammunition extra)***

WARNING
The Kalashni-kid is banned under international treaty in all EEC countries

New from The Independent

EUROPHILE-O-FAX

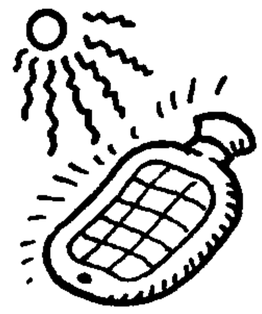
The 1992 personal organiser and diary that no European-lover can afford to be without. Yes, every single day records a major event in the EEC calendar, e.g. 27 Jan: 5th Anniversary of Signing of the Reykjavik Fruit and Green Vegetable Agreement. 8 August: European Fish Day. 10 Sept: Birthday of Dutch Foreign Minister Mr Ruud Lubbers. 25 Dec: Completion of MEP Toilets in Strasbourg Commission Building. And many more!

As used by The Rt. Hon. Edward Heath MP

Price: 99.99 ECUs

Save ££££s with the world's first

Solar-Powered Hot-Water Bottle



THIS break-through in bed-warming technology from Greenland brings you nighttime comfort at *no* expense whatsoever.

Environmentally friendly, the SPHWB uses only the energy of the sun to give you hours of nocturnal thermular relief.

Simply place the SPHWB in your garden or windowbox during the day and by bedtime the SPHWB is nice 'n' warm!! *(Requires minimum 23 hours continuous sunlight to operate.)*

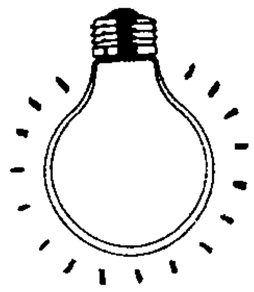
Colours: Antonia White, Red Ken, Rabbi Blue

Price: £7.99

Embarrassed by Sudden Lightbulb Failure? Never again, thanks to this technological breakthrough in electro-luminosity from Tenerife.

It's the

BZ20 LUXOMETER



It looks like any other lightbulb but with its silicon-chip monitor the **Luxometer** is years ahead of ordinary household light sources.

Instead of going out, the **BZ20 Luxometer** registers that the bulb is reaching the end of its life and therefore AUTOMATICALLY cuts out the current from the bulb, thus turning it off.

85p per dozen

DENTURE LOVERS

MINT-A-DENT

SUCK your teeth and enjoy a taste explosion. No more dull denture misery with this breakthrough in denture technology from Florida.

Flavours: ***Mint, peppermint, mint.***

Price: £2,798.99

PASSIVE SMOKERS! No more Ruined Meal Misery with the amazing

Gnome Dome™

This fully inflatable plastic bubble fits snugly round any restaurant table, insulating you and your loved ones from poisonous smoke fumes. Developed by scientists in Kuwait, the Gnome Dome is entirely see-through and comes with its own oxygen supply. Installed within seconds, it is also ideal for the office, airport lounges, railway stations or the beach.

Says the Surgeon-General of Albania: "It is a medical fact that the Gnome Dome prolongs life by up to twenty years."

£2,995.99 *(plus p&p)*

▲ Eye Novelty ▲

Yodelling Yoghurt from Maastricht

Uncap the carton and — hey presto! — a selection of Belgian Hits is yours to savour as you eat this mouth-watering dessert.

Songs include: *Puppet on a String, Theme Tune from Van Der Valk.*

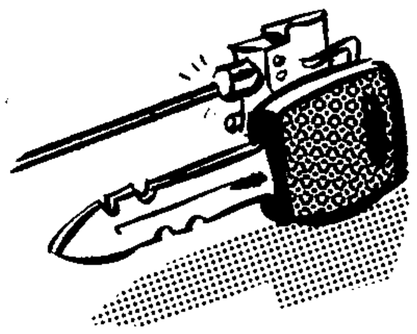
12 different flavours *(all guaranteed indistinguishable).*

33p per dozen cartons

The best new idea since Lum-o Spoon!

An end to dark-night-fumbling-for-the-wrong-key blues!

LUM-O-CLEF



A tiny laser device in your lock automatically triggers an answering light in the key you want on your keyring! Fits onto car, front door, office, fridge etc.

Saves hours of fumbling when — abracadabra — your key lights up! Easy to assemble. Full instructions in choice of languages: Japanese, Serbo-Croat, Urdu.

£7,934.78

Dog Lovers!

Why make Fido miss the fun when you're off to Meribel for a week with your family and friends?

Now he can join you on the piste, thanks to the revolutionary

Alpenhundski

DEVELOPED by the Swiss Army for use in nuclear emergencies, the Alpenhundski is now available for civilian use.

This extraordinary development in canine ski science means that your four-footed friend can experience all the thrills and spills of the slopes.

Totally safe, made from durable South American hardwood, the Alpenhundski can be adapted for most domestic pets. *(NB: Not advisable for fish.)*

Set of four: £738

Ideal for Travellers

HYDRO-SOAP

The first all-in-one soap that comes complete with its own supply of water.

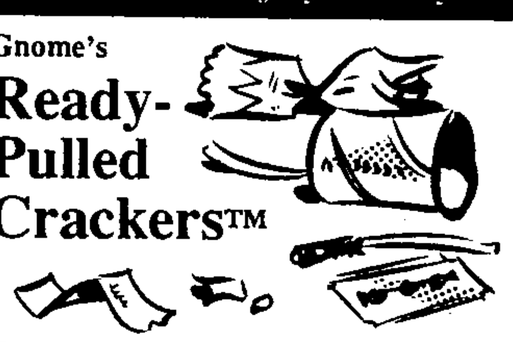
All you have to do is squeeze the Hydro-Soap and a jet of Highland Spring water pours out. Then soap hands! *Amazing! Hands are nice 'n' clean!*

Price: 10p

Christmas Safety Novelty

Gnome's

Ready-Pulled Crackers™



For a really safe Christmas there's no beating Gnome's Ready-Pulled Crackers.

Simply open the box and there they are, lying in tatters with gifts ready to use.

No risk of burns, sprains or heart attacks ruining your Christmas Day.

Gifts include: Razor blade, bottle of Lucozade, rottweiler.

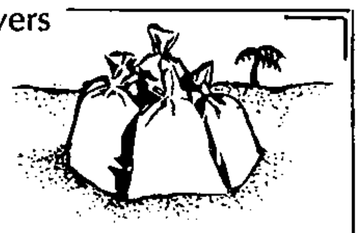
Price: £900 per box of 6.

WARNING: You must be over 18 to purchase these items.

XMAS MAIL MART

New Age Lovers

THE SANDS OF QUARK



FOR centuries the Babylonians have believed that the Sands of Quark possess mysterious powers that can dispel all stress-related symptoms and bring a deep inner peace. Says famous explorer **Sir Christopher van der Booker**: "I sincerely believe that the Bush People of the Babylonian deserts have discovered the secret of happiness."

Now you too can experience the mystic healing properties of these ancient sands by having a sample of your own. Each bag of sand carries a guarantee of authenticity by Shree Betty Moonshine (FRBS) from the New Age Institute of Quark.

Price: £25 per bag

THE IN-CAR VIRTUAL-REALITY EXPERIENCE

NO more strains and stresses of modern motoring thanks to the cutting edge of computer-generated image technology!

Now you can "drive" anywhere in your car with the three-dimensional, full stereo sensory experience of auto virtual reality.

Choose from these incredible programs: ● **Safari** ● **Sunday Afternoon Spin** ● **London Rush Hour** ● **M1 Contra-flow System** ● **M4 Fog Pile-Up** ● **Joyride** ● **Driving Test** ● **Hovercraft queue at Dover.** And many more!

"You can even drive completely drunk!" says world-famous columnist ***Auberon Waugh.***

Price: £300,000 (+ installation)

Amazing Botanical Sensation

The Piano-Playing Plant from Peru!!

Sempriniana Magniflora

Unique from the rainforests — not only does this plant look magnificent, but it actually plays the piano.

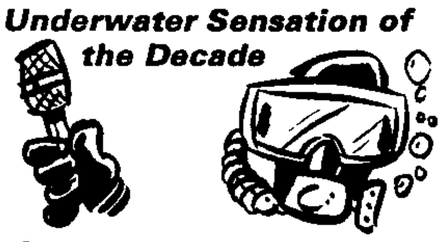
Place the plant on top of the piano and see its tendrils lovingly caress the keys. If watered regularly, it will play Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* or the theme tune from the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

CAUTION: Incorrect watering may cause plant to lose keyboard ability.

"I regard this as a major breakthrough in piano-playing plants," says John Stalker.

Price: £3,752

The Underwater Sensation of the Decade



SCUBA KARAOKE

All the fun of ordinary karaoke, but with a sub-aquatic dimension!

From Nigeria, centre of the singing scuba world, comes this complete "Scuba Karaoke" kit.

Includes face mask, air tanks, wet suit, microphone and digital CD stereophonic unit.

Singalong favourites include:

● ***Swing Low Sweet Chariot*** ● ***'Ere We Go*** ● ***Strauss, Four Last Songs*** *(Shurely shome mishtake? Ed)*

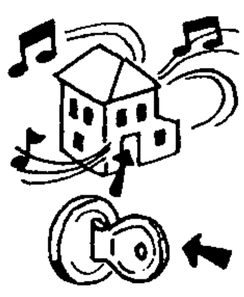
Full money-back guarantee if not satisfied. Underwater legend Jacques Cousteau says: "I never swim anywhere without Scuba Karaoke."

Price: £85,738

HOMEOWNERS

Say goodbye to coming-home-to-a-silent-house-misery with

CHUBB MUSIC CENTRE



Just slip your key into your lock and you enter a wonderful world of melody as the house fills with all your favourite tunes!

The 'Chubb Music Centre' makes coming home the musical experience of a lifetime.

Choose from this comprehensive range of 'Key-Activated Harmonies':

● **Theme tune from Rugby World Cup** ● **Selection from hit musical 'Hunting of the Snark'** ● **Theme tune from Rugby World Cup**

Price: £789.99

Toast Lovers

SayGoodbye to Toast Crumb Crises with the remarkable new

Crumb-o-Stik

All you do is toast bread as normal. Then simply spray 'Crumb-o-Stik' on to the finished slice and, hey presto, the crumbs stay on the toast rather than in the bed or on the floor!

Comes in handy aerosol cans (with ozone-friendly action) in three convenient sizes: Small, Large, Sumo.

WARNING: Crumb-o-Stik is made from polytoxins which should under no circumstances be taken internally.

£3.99

Say Goodbye to Noisy Champagne Cork Misery with

POP GONE

Price: £75,000.99

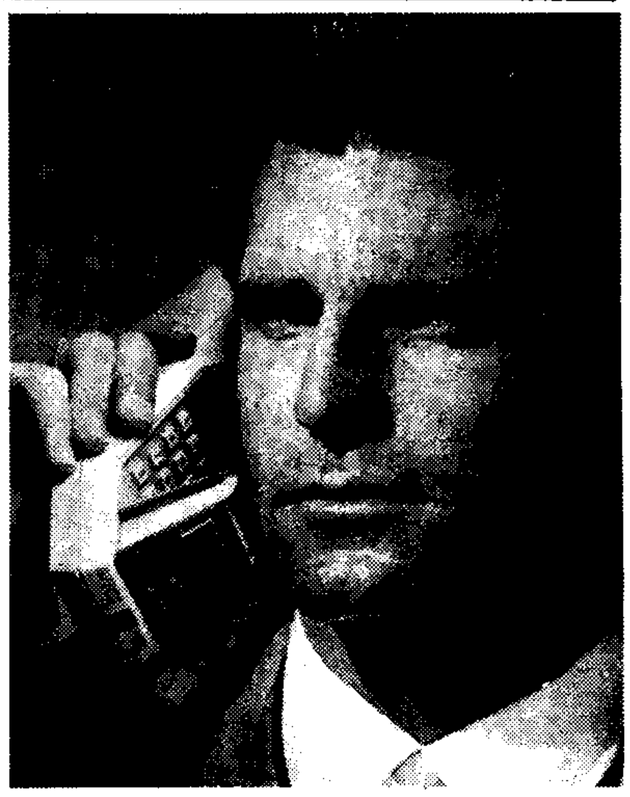
No more frayed nerves at your favourite functions due to unwanted cork explosions. Simply place your bottle of champagne or sparkling wine into Pop-o-Gone's sound-proofed chamber and all noise is gone! Developed by Ukrainian scientists from Chernobyl, the Pop-o-Gone is made from zero-decibel polygnomethene.

★ ***Plays theme tune from BBC's The Late Show***

BUSY BUSINESSMEN!

RAZ·O·PHONE

★ ***New from the Cameroons***



The two-in-one shaving and communication system for busy executives.

Shave as you talk and save hours of valuable business time, making you one jump ahead of your rivals!

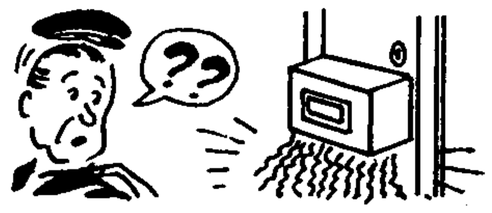
Choice of cordless or mains adaptor.

Colours: Black.

£783.00 (batteries extra) **RAZ·O·PHONE**

New from The Pentagon

The Digital Letterbox Shredder



EASILY fitted to any front door, the Letterbox Shredder automatically deals with unwanted material coming through the door, e.g. junk mail, poll tax demands, the Sunday Times.

SHREDDER sorts out rubbish, leaving you with only the items you desire. **Price: £57,310.99**

Plays Theme Tune from TV's popular Ashenden programme

SATELLITE TV FANS

Now at last you can watch your favourite satellite programmes on your miniature television! Thanks to

WRIST-O-DISH

In the past you had to watch boring BBC and ITV when you turned on your portable mini-telly.

But now the amazing 'Wrist-o-Dish' brings you a choice of 38 channels from all around the world.

Functions as a normal wristwatch but at the touch of a button... Bingo! It's a fully operational mini-satellite dish.

Must be seen to be believed.

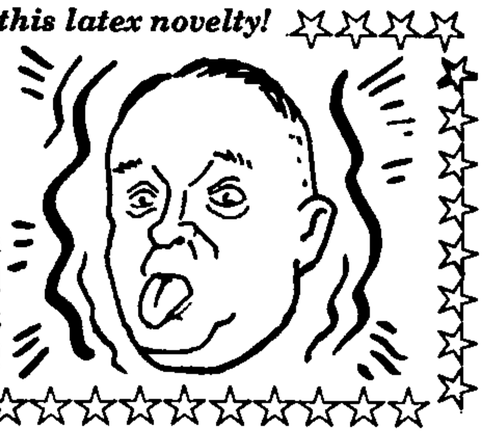
Says Andrew Neill: "Now you can watch Sky Movies in the garden or on the bus!"

Colours: Pink Floyd, Cilla Black, Red Adair.

Price: 10p

Hearty fun for all the family with this latex novelty!

The Ned Sherrin Horror Mask



AMAZINGLY lifelike! Simply put it on and watch friends and relatives reel in horror as you begin to tell stories about Noel Coward and Hermione Gingold! Works every time. **25p (+ p&p)**

10 CHESTER SQUARE
LONDON
SW1

Dear Bill:

I'm glad you enjoyed our lunch together the other day in our little local in Chester Mews, the Frog & Grapes. Mine Host is not normally so offensive, but I discovered afterwards that Maurice had been in the night before and there has been some strife with a fire extinguisher.

When I got back, Mr O'Grady who is installing the bullet-proof windows in the downstairs gents tipped me off that there was "some old feller with weepy eyes" waiting for me upstairs in the drawing room, and he suspected he "might have been at the drink". This turned out to be our old friend Oystereyes, aka W. Whitelaw, who was sitting among the wallpaperers, his hands clasped on a blackthorn stick, eyeing the drinks cabinet in a wistful manner.

When I had led him into a non-hard-hat zone under the stairs and provided us both with a large brownie apiece, he told his sorry tale. He was very much out of things nowadays, looking after his pheasants in Cumberland, and very glad to be away from the fray. Was this all he had come to tell me? I asked him. "All right, Thatcher, I'll come to the point. No one's suggesting that Major is a genius, but now we've got him we've got to stick by him. The thing is, there's a lot of money riding on this. If our lot are seen to be fighting like a pack of mad dogs and Tebbit goes on the telly every night saying we're going to lose, a lot of our friends in the City are going to catch a very bad cold. You can't rely on MI5 any more to keep us in power."

As the old boy peered gloomily about, muttering on in this way and scratching his leg, I could see that the years had done nothing to speed up his mental processes. I must confess to feeling some impatience as I had a busy afternoon ahead of me — changing a golfing video for the evening, taking the plastic wrapping off a new shirt and writing a polite decliner to the Deal Rotary to get out of drawing their Christmas raffle due to pressure of work. Just then, however, a loud slam below and a gruff scolding voice interrogating Mr O'Grady about progress announced that the Boss had returned from her luncheon at the Kuwaiti Embassy. The old man stiffened, shuffled to his feet and prepared to embrace his former employer.

"Ah, Margaret!" he began, as of yore. "We see so little of each other, though when you join us in the Lords…" "Lords? What are you doing here, Willie? And why is that bottle open? Give it to me this minute. Do you know what time it is, Denis? If anything is to be served, it will be tea."

Badly crumpled, the old boy meandered back towards his former topic. "As Tories, Margaret, we must pull together. You yourself have so often stressed the need for loyalty." "Yes, indeed. Loyalty to me! And where was that when I needed it?" Whitelaw's eyebrows flickered and he drew out a handkerchief. "But Europe or no Europe, Margaret, what can be achieved by this course of action? The party is divided, Major as a leader discredited, Kinnock handed victory on a plate. What then?"

If Whitelaw was trying to put the wind up my good lady, I could see that he was not having any great measure of success. Indeed, an unearthly smile had begun to play about her lips and she looked hard into the middle distance. "What then, Willie? The people will decide. A referendum, perhaps some entirely new form of government. Who knows? The future belongs to the ordinary men and women of Britain who will decide between Major's dithering - and sanity."

A groan escaped poor Whitelaw. It had become clear to him, I could see, that he had gained nothing from his visit but a large scotch. However, the brave old campaigner tried one last shot. "May I make a personal point, Margaret? We have all seen how tragically Ted has frittered away his post-Prime Ministerial years in vindictive trouble-making when he could have…" M's voice cut through his faltering monologue like a factory siren. "Mr O'Grady! Will you show Lord Whitelaw to the door? Then I want to talk to Gomolka about the intruder deterrent on the roof-light." At this the familiar sound of the fiddler johnny next door hammering on the wall with his stick brought the interview to an end.

Has the boy Mark sent you a prospectus for the Foundation? I wouldn't have believed it possible, but he has already canvassed Maurice and the Major for an "investment" of fifty grand each, in return for which they would get letters of introduction to influential figures in the Middle East business world and an annual calendar with a full-colour picture of the Boss in the uniform of the W.R.V.S. All I can say is put it straight in the wastepaper basket. I have no control over the loathsome offspring, and I can only apologise for his trespassing on your privacy.

Talking of which, I see our friend Runcie was made to look a bit of a pratt when they finally let out that tall johnnie with the beard. It seems that his so-called "Special Envoy", as I suspected at the time, was nothing of the kind, but was working for Hopalong and his mad Colonel in some big arms scam to do with Nicaragua. Next thing, no doubt, we shall discover that the Boy Mark was in on the same racket.

Much amusement in the bar the other night over the following. Question: "What's the difference between Cap'n Bob and an Essex Girl?" Answer: "There isn't one - they both go down in Tenerife." Maurice did the nose trick when it was explained to him.

Yours, going down for the third time,

Denis

Guilty prisoner discovered shock

by Our Legal Correspondents
Joshua Rosencrantz
and **Joshua Guiltyswine**

THE LEGAL world was rocked to its foundations yesterday when the Court of Appeal found that a man convicted of murder on seventeen counts was, in fact, guilty of the crimes he claimed to have committed.

Extensive forensic tests have shown that police evidence produced at this trial in 1986 was in fact authentic.

"This makes a mockery of traditional judicial procedure in this country," said Inspector Knacker. "I suppose there's always one good apple in the barrel," the controversial inspector went on, "but we will soon find him and sort him out."

Lord Denning is 209.

KILOSTATE

Specialists in all property management from single rooms to houses wish Terry Waite and his family a very happy future as they are reunited together.

081-679 6015

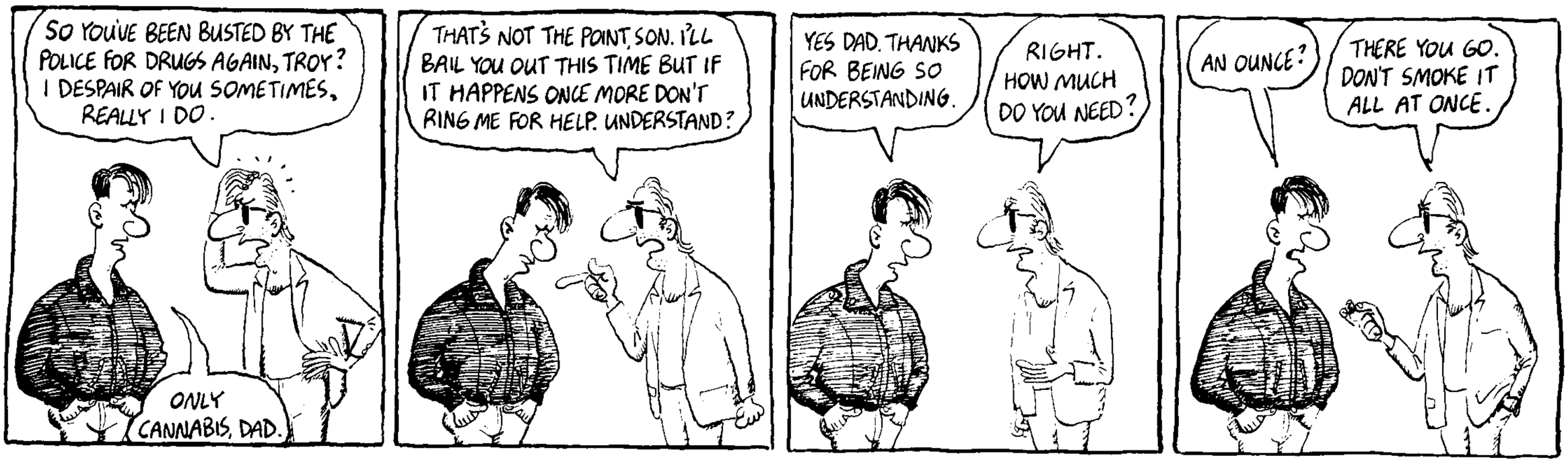
South London Press

Great Bores Of Today.

"... I mean as my friends will tell you I'm no fan of royalty but the way she visits the victims is incredibly brave and last week she did this conference about safe sex where they handed out condoms and she took it all in her stride she's taken the whole stigma out of it when she shook hands and kissed the baby and people had assumed you could catch it like it was the plague or something none of the others would do that like the Queen Mother what's she ever said about safe sex? and Fergie's just a joke but with her there's a new openness and honesty about the whole thing I mean one picture of her is worth a million leaflets I think kids are really much more aware now and she may well be the only person who could get the message across to them no I've no time for royalty I'm basically an anarchist but someone has to give a lead and if it has to be her then so be it..."

Celeb

LIGGER


SO YOU'VE BEEN BUSTED BY THE POLICE FOR DRUGS AGAIN, TROY? I DESPAIR OF YOU SOMETIMES, REALLY I DO.
ONLY CANNABIS, DAD.
THAT'S NOT THE POINT, SON. I'LL BAIL YOU OUT THIS TIME BUT IF IT HAPPENS ONCE MORE DON'T RING ME FOR HELP. UNDERSTAND?
YES DAD. THANKS FOR BEING SO UNDERSTANDING.
RIGHT. HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED?
AN OUNCE?
THERE YOU GO. DON'T SMOKE IT ALL AT ONCE.

The World's Worst Columnist

HAVE YOU noticed how many leaves there are lying about the streets suddenly. Why is this? I read no explanation of it in the newspapers. Yet there the leaves are, as plain as plain can be. Sometimes you even see people sweeping them up. Odd isn't it?

I OBSERVE many shop windows are displaying an old man with a white beard and a long red coat. Who can this be I wonder? He seems perfectly harmless by the look of him but I am not so sure. Perhaps one day we will be given an explanation by the powers that be. And none too soon.

I SPENT a weekend at the seaside recently and noticed a curious thing. Sometimes the sea was near the shore and sometimes it was quite a distance away. Why was this, I wonder? Is it anything to do with global warming? If so, it is a frightening thought that the sea can be affected like this. But just suppose the leaves in the streets are in some way connected with it. Then would it be a surprise to discover that the old bearded man in red is behind the whole thing? (You're fired. Ed.)

Indy man makes joke shock

Scientists admit 'We are baffled'

by Our Humour Staff **Melvyn Gagg and Punchline O'Booze**

THE WORLD'S scientists were said to be totally mystified last night by the appearance of what seemed to be a joke in the opening sentence of an article by Mr Peter Jenkins, the distinguished political commentator.

For years it was assumed that the *Independent* contained no jokes. "But we must now rethink our entire theory of the universe," said a leading Dutch humourologist, Prof Laurens van der Jøk of the Haagen-Dazs University, Maastricht.

Poor Old Kington

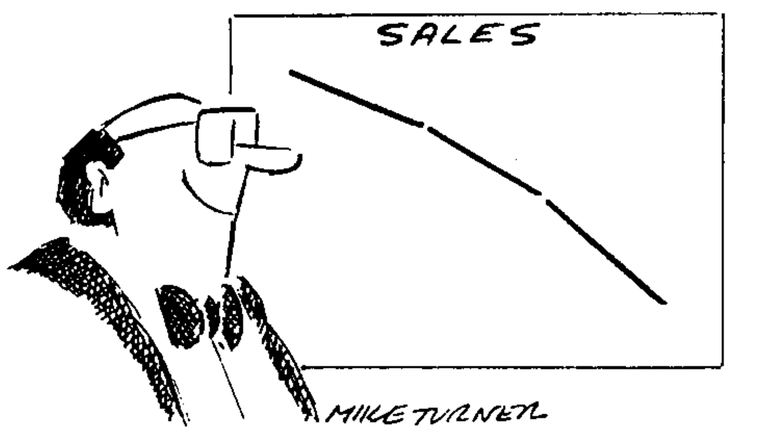
The "joke" which has turned on its head the hitherto accepted view of Peter Jenkins was contained in a reference to Mr John Major celebrating his first year as Prime Minister.

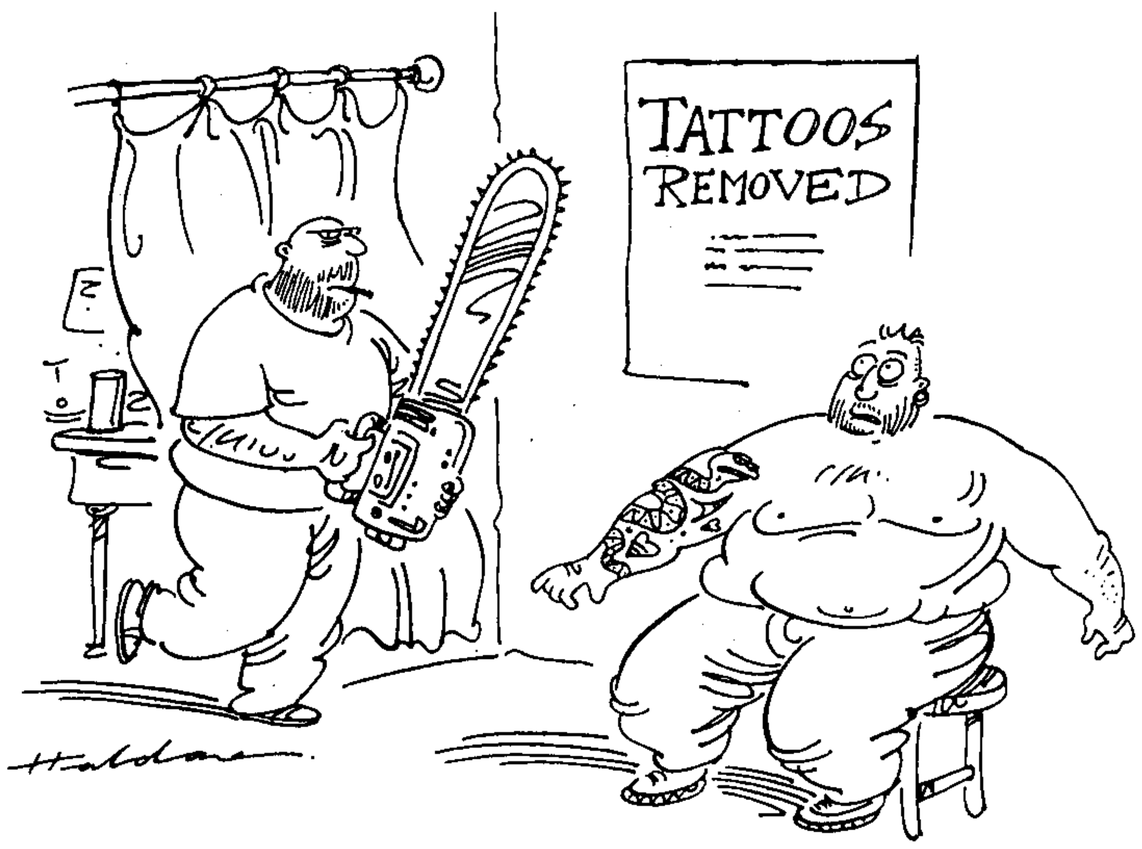
Mr Jenkins described Mr Major "blowing out a candle on his fried bread".

A spokesman for the *Independent* dismissed the "joke" theory as "ludicrous and absurd". "Mr Jenkins, of course, meant 'birthday cake' but owing to a computer error, this appeared as 'fried bread'.

"Clearly no one in his right mind would place a lighted candle on a piece of fried bread. I do hope this puts an end to the wild speculation that Mr Jenkins might deliberately have attempted to make a joke."

Sir Andreas Whittam-Strobes is 82.





'DRUNK IN CHARGE' EDITOR CLEARED

by Our Observer Correspondent **Lonrh O'Booze**

A FLEET STREET editor was yesterday cleared on a charge of being "drunk in charge of the *Observer*".

Mr Donald 'Pixie' Trelford, 59, told the court that "it was simply bad luck" that he had been discovered sitting in the editor's chair at 5.30 on the afternoon of 18 March 1988, after he had returned from "a brief working lunch" with his research assistant, Miss Pamella Tangential.

"I had no intention of editing," he told the court. "It just so happened that I was sitting at the desk at the time, when the police arrived to arrest the proprietor."

Mr Tiny Fuhrer is 84.

Lord Runcie An Apology

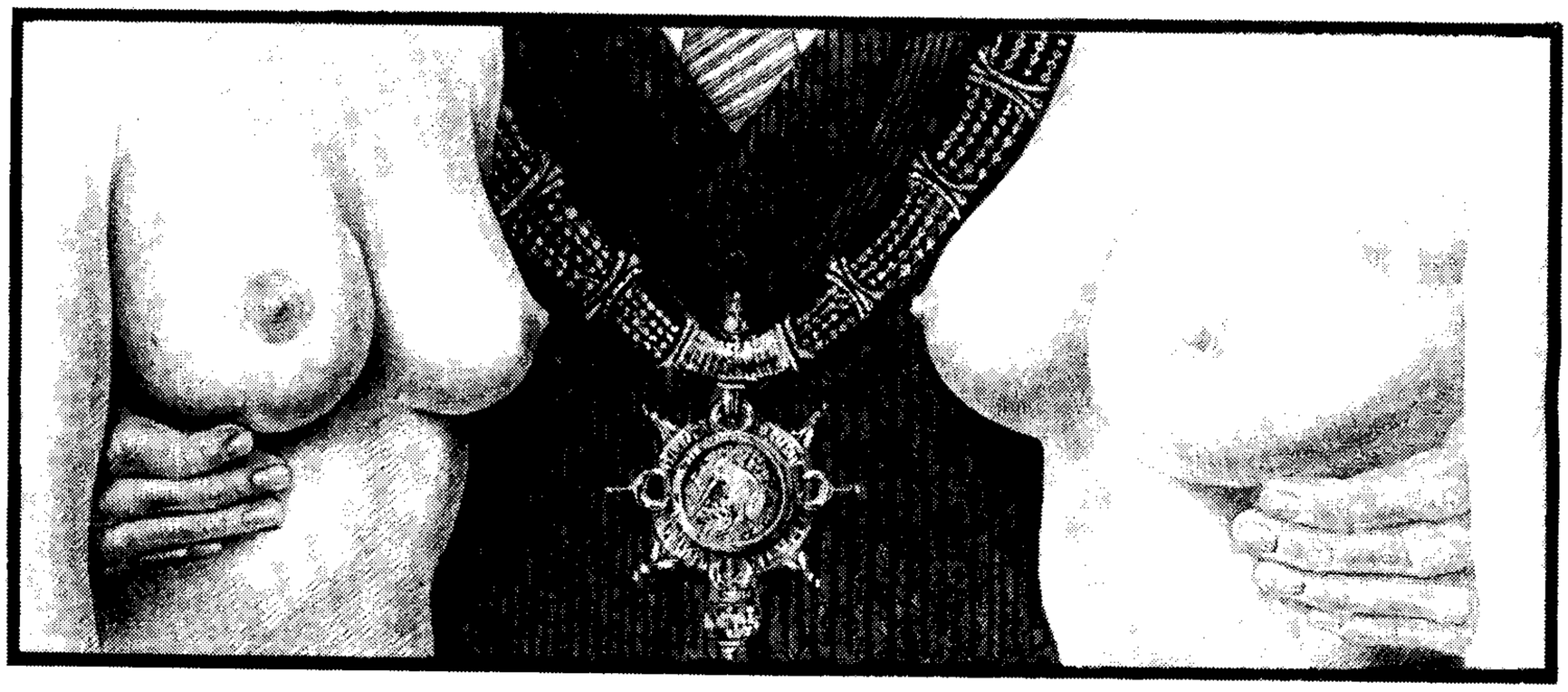
During the last few years, in common with all other newspapers, we may have inadvertently stated on a number of occasions that the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr Robert Runcie, was a weak and vacillating figure who lacked any firm beliefs and had brought the Church of England into disrepute by his woolly and ill-thought-out attitudes to the issues of the day. We further alleged that his successor, Mr George Carey, was a welcome blast of fresh air, signalling the return of the Church to traditional beliefs and values.

We now recognise that there was not a scintilla of truth in any of these allegations. We recognise that Dr Carey is, in fact, a woolly-minded, cack-handed lunatic whose "advisers" have encouraged him to put his foot in it at every available opportunity. We accept that Lord Runcie was the last great Archbishop of Canterbury in the tradition of Temple, Thomas À Becket and Cardinal Wolsey, and would like to offer our sincerest apologies to this towering figure, who should be invited to return to his post immediately before the poor old C of E finally goes down the tubes forever.

TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

Illuminated by BERT KITCHEN



IN HIS annual report, Lieutenant-General Viroj Prao-in, Metropolitan Commissioner of Bangkok's police, said: "Car theft in Bangkok has dropped by 60 per cent due to a well-organised shoot-to-kill policy by the Traffic Police. Captain Ta Pen Ngyen assures me that his men are on top of the situation."

GIVING evidence in her claim for compensation, Mrs Olive Gray told the court: "When Mickey, my cat, died, I approached Still Life Taxidermists in order to have him preserved and mounted in a life-like posture.

"I agree that the Still Life people warned me that, as Mickey had died of old age (18), it would be difficult to recreate a true likeness. But in spite of my regular enquiries Still Life did not return Mickey, mounted.

"Finally, they admitted that as he had failed to 'freeze properly' they would be returning his remains in a bucket — but you cannot say that was the same thing as mounting.

"As well as this, when we got him back his head was missing, so instead of a finely mounted memento all we have got is Mickey's skin pinned to a board surrounded by his photographs."

ASKED for her account of the incident, Mrs Lavumisa Shabangu said: "My husband, Hhohho, was very impressed when he heard Deacon Ben Nsibandze of the Red Gown Zionists preach. We were invited to their midnight vigil and, after listening to Deacon Ben for the second time, Hhohho jumped to his feet and, to the applause of all present, declared that he had been saved. Then he lay down and went to sleep.

"But when Deacon Ben began his one a.m. reading from the Bible, I am afraid to say that Hhohho gave a long, loud fart in his sleep. Deacon Ben became very angry and drew a knife, so I woke Hhohho up and, when he saw what was happening, he ran off into the darkness and I have not seen him since."

SUGGESTING that the second event be taken into consideration, Miss Rosemary Woollings said that Miss Sara Etches, a waitress, had punched, and broken, Miss Theresa Craggs's nose after the latter (a hairdresser) had failed to set the former's curls to her liking.

Meeting Miss Craggs outside the Jade Garden Takeaway on the day following the first punch, Miss Etches punched Miss Craggs's nose again. However, the second punch effectively reset Miss Craggs's nose in a perfectly straight line so the matter was best laid to rest.

£100 compensation to Miss Craggs.

HAVING won the first gold medal for Greece in the Mediterranean Games lightweight boxing championship, Mr Angelos Tsiripudis was taken to hospital after being beaten up by the Thessaloniki police who mistook him for an Albanian immigrant.

"THE ENTIRE incident has been blown up out of all proportion," said Mayor Dave Bradford of Queenstown-Lakes, after a photograph of himself with his arms around the waists of two topless girls appeared in all the major New Zealand newspapers.

"I was asked to judge the national jelly-wrestling contest in our Winter Festival. I like to enter into the spirit of things, and when the contestants — two decent young women who hold responsible positions in the hotel industry — threw away their tops while rolling about in a four-metre-square pit of raspberry jelly, I simply could not decide who was the winner of this fun event. So I went up on stage and congratulated them both."

INFORMATION: Malay Times 12.9.91; Greenwich & Eltham Mercury 3.10.91; South China Morning Post 22.9.91; Southern Evening Echo 17.9.91; Athens News 31.7.91; The Dominion, Wellington 19.7.91.

MONITORS: Donald M. McNicoll, Kate Woods, Anon, Pam Blackman, Anon, John Prebble.

TERRY — 'IT'S GREAT TO BE FREE'

by our Media Staff **Jane Thynne-Stuff**

"I HAVE been shut away for seven years, completely out of touch with the outside world." So said the man millions know as simply Terry, as he emerged yesterday looking remarkably fat considering his long ordeal. "I managed to keep sane by reciting all the catchphrases I could remember," he said, "but I often lost track and forgot which day it was — Monday, Wednesday or Friday."

Asked about his minders, Terry said: "I bear no grudge. In their own way they were very good to me. They used to give me huge piles of money every day.

"Still," he concluded, "it's wonderful to be out. I don't know what I shall do, but I expect it will be much better than the last seven years."

Terry Wogan is 108.

"I hear he's hired some PR girl"

BOY FOUND ALONE IN HOUSE WITH DERANGED WOMAN

by Our Social Services Staff **Polly Toyboy**

SOCIAL workers were shocked and horrified yesterday when they broke into a house in Central London and found a 47-year-old boy quivering in a corner while an elderly woman screamed abuse at him.

"We could see that he was in a state of abject terror," said Kevin Beard, 36, team leader, "and had no idea of what had been happening in the outside world."

It seems that the boy had been given no formal education and knew only a handful of phrases such as "Oh yes", "I agree" and "Please don't hit me again with your handbag".

Ma Strict

The social workers had found the house in an appalling state of dereliction. Rooms were stuffed high with returned poll tax forms, ripped up posters reading LABOUR ISN'T WORKING, yellowing invitations to Jeffrey Archer's Christmas parties and millions of signed photographs of the mad woman.

Also hidden in corners were the decaying bodies of a number of cabinet ministers, including a bespectacled sheep, later identified as Sir Geoffrey Howe.

OBITUARIES

Greatest-ever musical genius dies

(reprinted from all newspapers including the Daily Hellograph, the New Musical Daily Express and the Rolling Strobes [Independent]).

A MAN none of us had ever heard of until yesterday has tragically died of Aids, aged 45. A number of young persons on this newspaper (not including TV's Charles Moore) have informed us that the untimely death of the late Sir Fredswell Mercury (real name Fred Telecom) is, without doubt, the greatest blow to the arts community since the death of Ludwig von Beethoven.

With his unconventional lifestyle and exuberant coke-sniffing, Mr Mercury became a role model for a whole generation, who saw in his wild on-stage gyrations and mock-camp theatricality a savage commentary on the ethos of the Thatcher years *(Am I on the right track? H.M-M.)*.

His macho image and legendary bi-sexuality won many friends and admirers the world over. *(Is this tactful enough? H.M-M.)*

But it is above all in his music that Sir Telecom will live forever in the hearts and minds of his millions of devoted fans. Such immortal melodies as... er... *La Boheme*, Mozart's *Requiem* and Handel's *Largo* must rank as some of the greatest masterpieces the world has ever known.

But it is above all for his introduction of leather underwear and bondage gear into the mainstream of musical culture that Amadeus von Mercury will be *(Cont'd p.94)*

The Alternative Rocky Horror Service Book

No. 94: A Service For The Evangelisation Of The Islamic Community *(© Carey and Sharey Publications, Lambeth, 1991)*

The President: Praise be to Allah.

All: Yes indeed. Allah is the greatest.

The President: There is only one God and Mohammed is his prophet.

All: Death to Rushdie.

There shall then be a reading from the Holy Koran, or from some other suitable text.

President: The infidels must be slain.

All: It is the only language that they understand.

The Homily

(to be delivered by the Archbishop of Canterbury)

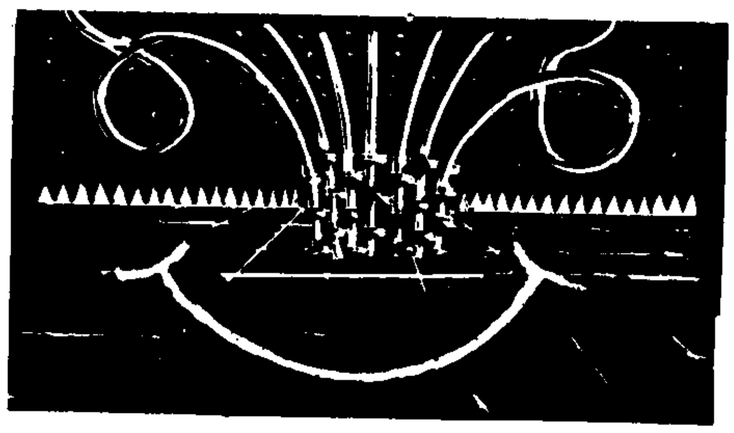
Dearly beloved, we are instructed by the Lord to go out into the world and bear witness to the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ, who as all Muslims accept was quite an important prophet in his own way. This surely must bind us together with all our Islamic brethren and lead us to live in harmony without trying to force our beliefs down other people's throats or expecting them to live according to the norms of our own ethnic group.

All: Amen to that. Can we burn the books now?

The Congregation shall then gather round the alter and show their non-judgemental, even-handedness by burning copies of The Satanic Verses *and the* New Testament. *All shall now sing from the* Cat Stevens Hymns for Today.

"Allah things bright and beautiful...
Allah things great and small."

DIARY



JANET STREET-PORTER

Completely bloody brilliant or grooverama as my live-in boyfriend Normski might say. I just come back from the United States of America — United States of Arseholes, more like, when you see what they're doing against the duly elected democratic government of President Ortega in El Salvador, talk about grimsville — where I managed to sign up some of the most brilliantly faberoso new programmes around.

I don't want to come over all hoity-toity, no way, but I just happen to be the Head of Youth Progs at the Beeb, and I don't want to appear stuck up about it but I've bloody well revolutionised the mid-evening output on the screens four-days-a-bloody-week. Talk about boring, the other department heads are so *square* they still think Kenneth Kendall is where it's at. Nerd off, I feel like saying to them, don't you geezers realise that the hippest place in the planet is not Shepherds Bush but Ameri-fuckin-ca? Rap music, Andy Warhol, dark glasses, Adidas trainers, sports cars — they're the latest thing around, and they all come out of what we in the know call the Big Apple.

So anyway, I come back from America armed with a whole range of progies that are going to knock you literally sideways they're so gear. TV just won't be the same again, no way José, not after you see what we got. Here's the Spring list of the ultra-faberooni progs upcoming on a set at a squat near you — *The Man From Uncle* (episodes 25-56), *Mission Impossible* (fourth series), *The Very Best Of The High Chapparal* and *The Andy Williams Half Hour (1968-75)*.

Are the greysuits at the Beeb ready for this rap, I ask myself? Probably not, but stuff 'em guys — let's groovebag!

Current fave rave smash craze-ups: potato croquette sandwiches on rye with prawn, a short black brocade sheath with triple shoulder straps and a marabou feather trim from the completely brilliant Azzedine Alaia, massive great canvases full of blacks, browns and kind of blacky-browns by this great new Aborigine post-punk artist I discovered in Manchester, shoe-horns (as is well known, I have a collection plastered into the ceiling of my bedroom), my boyfriend Normski (of course!), his little brothers Gormski, Dormski and Bormski, who're incidentally the best rappers I've heard all month, the latest totally brill CD by the Pet Shop Boys and, for snax, baked beans served on cocktail stix covered in a white choccy sauce — scrumerooni per favor!

Talk about tragic. The Head Squares at the Beeb have just admitted they've never even heard of The Sauerkraut 3 Featuring Perkin X. "They're only number 5 in this week's RAP 'N' TOSS magazine's disco playlist, but don't let that bother you!" I say sarcastically. I'm in the process of arguing that it's about bloody time they had more rap on stuffy snootsville programmes like *Newsnight* instead of all them men in suits talking out their arses 'bout nothin' in 'articular. In my humble opinion, Normski would make a far more in presenter than Peter Snow, who frankly just don't have the rhythm. "And another thing," I say, when they shake their grey heads. "All the kids I know are sick up to their arseholes with that Major bloke monopolising the news programmes all bloody time. They want more of Magenta and Sankha and Antoine, people with gloves, people who know what to do with lycra, people with a bit of style, for Christ's sake!" And do they listen? Not bloody likely. Tragic.

I guess you could say I'm a bit of a rebel. Let me throw a few for instances at you. Like, when I go for munchies at The Savoy, I refuse to wear a fur coat, I'm sorry I just do. Also, my spectacles are tinted and unlike most other people in top jobs, I think it's high time this country got rid of that bloody woman Thatcher as Prime Minister, I mean this poll tax is just absurd. And when I give a dinner party, I have been known to tell my guests to sit wherever they want, none of this man, woman, man, woman lark, and also if it's soup I say let's not bother with soup-spoons, let's just use any old spoons. Yeah, rebel is my middle name, and sometimes I think I know how Malcolm X (my mega-tip for '92) must have felt. I guess that's why I was asked to deliver the address at this year's Female Persons In The Media Luncheon at the Cafe Royal last week. Talk about going to bloody town. I wore my £1,500 Junior Gaultier lycra go-go top with my £850 A La Mode waistcoat and a dishy little £1,650 Hamnett wrapa-round skirt number and I looked fan-tas-tic as I got out my fave Mercedes with its crazy personalised numberplate (JSP1 — my initials) and swung through those doors. The theme of my address? "Street Cred: An End to the Consumer Society As We Know It". I guess it might not have been what they wanted to hear, but too bad. Anti-establishment? You betcha, babe.

You should see Normski and JSP1 groovin' down the clubs to all the latest sounds around. We sure know where it's at, and where it's at is at downtown Boogieville, shakin' our bodies and lettin' it all hang out to all the latest hip-hop bops on the turntable. Faaaar out! Of course, when I boogie on down to clubland, I take my professional eyes with me, 'cos I'm always on the lookout for revolutionary new talent and style trends for all the completely brilliant new projex I got lined up for my forthcoming Youth Progs. Then I write up the latest buzzes on the street in my BBC notebook under "WOT'S HOT", including "MEGA-HIP WORDZ AND XPRESSIONS" and I make bloody sure they're featured on the next upcoming Youth Prog, okay?

You want xamples? Like, the last time Normski and JSP1 strutted to the mega-mega-monster sounds at the Bubblehouse in Brixton, I wrote these notes on four of the very latest most swingiest catchphrases the totally hip can hear down the klubz these days. Don't ask me what they mean, but they're hot, they're in, they're totally brilliant and I overhead them all:

1. "Move Over, Gran."
2. "Wot-a-Frite."
3. " 'Oo's the OAP?"
4. "44 Minimum."

After the completely unreal success of my infotainment prog named after the catchword "DEFII", I'm thinking of calling the mega follow-up "44MIN". Kinda katchy and kurrent, huh, and so wot if it means nuthin to the middle-class and the middle-aged? Frankly, love, they're not wot I'm about, not at aaall, man.

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: Charles has received yet another rebuff, this time from the National Farming For Profit Association.

Now read on...

"IT really is... er..." "Appalling?" Diana absently finished her husband's sentence without looking up from her latest copy of the *Hello* magazine with its exclusive pictures of Di's autumn wardrobe.

Charles wandered towards the window and peered morosely through the leaded panes at the Marina Long-Tailed Sheep grazing peacefully in the paddock, and beyond them the black-coated Manchurian yaks, a gift from the Dalai Lama himself, wandering free range in the herbaceous border as Mother Nature had ordained.

"Look, Diana! This is what farming should be. Not chemicals and fertilizers and high-rise tower blocks for chickens."

Diana's attention was still focused on a double page spread of herself and Elton John at the funeral of the late Freddie Mercury. Her black cloak, a stunning creation from the House of Sumo Fatwah, the exciting new Chinese-Iranian designer *(Get on with it. Ed.)*

"I mean these farmers don't seem to appreciate what I'm saying. They have rejected all my ideas."

As if sensing his thoughts, a Peruvian web-footed goat peered through the window and eyed its master appreciatively.

"It is amazing how some of these animals seem to know what one is thinking. Sir Laurens has something to say about that in his book *Jo'burg On $100 A Day*. How does he put it? 'A dog is man's best friend.' That's very true, you know, and I think it applies equally to goats and yaks and er... thingies."

Diana put down her magazine in irritation.

"If I hear another word about that old bore van der Post I think I'll be sick. No wonder no one wants to listen to you, you're out of touch..."

"Me? Out of touch? What does that mean?"

"There you are, Chazza. You're surrounded by old wrinklies. Most of them have got one foot in the grave."

Charles was stunned at this unexpected outburst and stammered: "But... but... what about Dr Barkworth... he's scarcely sixty... and Sir Hugh Casson... very young at heart... and Sir Alan Fitztightly, he knew all about this chap Freddie Mercury and so on."

Diana got up and moved elegantly, but purposefully, towards the door.

"And that's another thing. They're all men. All boys together, that's your scene. No wonder the punters have gone off you."

The door slammed, leaving Charles staring blankly at his friendly goat. Perhaps it was true. Perhaps he should make a conscious effort to relate to young persons more and also to women, yes, and there *was* a female perspective on things, a sort of Ying and Yang effect... and maybe Barkworth and Co *were* getting on a bit... Diana was right... he would do something about it that very afternoon. She would be pleased...

DIANA was surprised to see her parking space filled by a gleaming white Embonpoint drop-back coupe with the number plate PR 1. A little piqued, she parked awkwardly under the row of now-denuded haw trees and made her way to the gabled front entrance of Highgrove House.

She fumbled for her key, only to find the door already open. She walked down the long carpeted hallway lined with portraits of the Alta-Sax-Cockburn dynasty and their Krönenburg relatives. There was one in particular that Diana disliked, the young Gustavus von Fogeysburg by Holstein the Younger, which always reminded her of someone. It was the ears, she thought... but what was this? From the study came the tinkle of girlish laughter and her husband's deep answering chortles. Diana, her curiosity instantly aroused, paused outside the door.

"These watercolours of yours... May I call you Charles?"

"Please do. I know we've only been acquainted for a few hours but I feel already that I've known you all my life..."

"This picture of the donkey in the moonlight is unbelievably good. If you weren't the heir to the throne, you'd still be a great painter in your own right."

"So sweet of you to say that. I can't wait for you to meet Diana. She was only saying this morning that..."

Diana could restrain herself no longer. She pushed open the door to see her husband sitting on the sofa showing his portfolio to a young woman draped over the arm next to him, her long legs encased in sheer black silk.

"Hello, darling." Charles stood up to greet his wife. "This is Melinda Harpey who's going to be my new... er... adviser... sort of keep me in touch. Isn't that right?" The exquisitely dressed public relations executive smiled and touched his forearm.

"Yes, Charles, that's exactly what I'm going to do."

Diana stared hard at Charles and the woman beside him. "Well, I'd better leave you to it," Diana said through perfect clenched teeth, her peach-like skin reddening with an unaccustomed anger. She turned on her heels and left Charles alone with his new companion. As Diana stormed down the corridor she caught a faint snatch of conversation resuming, "I can't understand it at all..."

"Never mind, Charlie, we've got more important things to talk about..."

(To be continued)

Literary Review

Prose... and cons

Books of the Year

NOT ONLY has this been a poor year for books, it's been — far more importantly — a poor year for books of the year. There's been a ruinous outbreak of shame among literary editors. At the *Independent on Sunday*, Blake Morrison did not even let his reviewers tip each others' books. Dimwit, spoilsport, wally! Why does he think we read them, except to see who's licking whose arse, and who has churlishly failed to reciprocate?

And, worse, this year he and others have had the bright idea of setting each reviewer to choose books in his or her own area only. This robs us of the pleasure of seeing people pretend to make a measured selection from all the books published over the last 12 months (say, 65,000).

No publishing year could ever be dire enough completely to defeat the kind of people asked to choose their "books of the year". But this year's books have approached closer to acknowledged tedium than those of any year in living memory.

Some reviewers have actually confessed it. In the *Independent* Gabriel Josipovici firmly blamed the books: "This is the first year for as long as I can remember when I cannot think of a single book that really moved me." In the *Sunday Times*, Peter Kemp got the bad news over quickly: "In what has been a dismal year for new novels, Pat Barker's *Regeneration* (Viking) shines out." His editor, John Walsh, took exactly the same approach, adding only some phallic Celtic poncing: "While several good novelists seemed to be operating at half-strength this year, William Trevor's *Two Lives* (Viking) stood out like a dolmen in a playground." (Presumably meaning "huge" — as in "have I got a dolmen for you, darling!")

Even Anita Brookner thought things looked a bit flat. "Not an adventurous year," she observed in the *Spectator*. "All the established novelists appeared at their most characteristic and therefore their most predictable." Including her. Usually, Ruth Rendell nominates Anita Brookner and Anita Brookner nominated Ruth Rendell. Not this year. Too tired, perhaps.

It was a struggle for anybody to find a bright side to look on. Numerous frauds protested that it had been a good year for literary biography. Anthony Burgess, bless him, went one better. "This has been a good year for scholarly compilations," he announced; an elegant way of allowing that it has been pisspoor for everything else (certainly nobody chose his silly book about Mozart).

The classic Burgess Manoeuvre, of ostentatiously selecting books in foreign languages, was almost universally adopted this time around, though not so much to show off as to hint that, *franchement*, English books had been terrible. Richard Cobb chose a book by the "parish priest of the village of Vattetot-sous-Beaumont in the Pays de Caux from 1945 to the late 1980s"; Hilary Spurling improved on this by choosing *La Femme Lapidée*, "an Iranian journalist's laconic account of the stoning of a woman taken in adultery four years ago in the Ayatollah's Iran." That's one in the eye for English writers, anyhow.

Wallflowers abounded. Michael Ignatieff chose Julian Barnes, but nobody at all chose his dreadful novel (definitely not Julian Barnes).

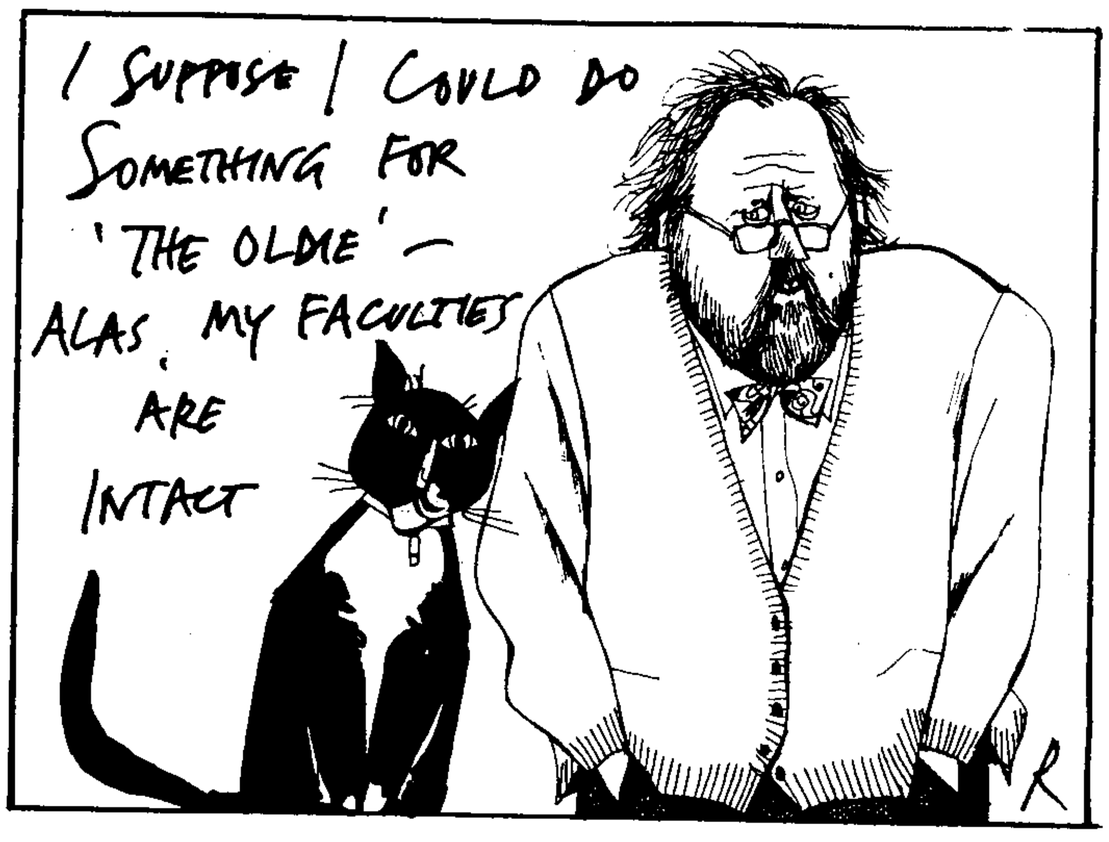
The most pointed snubs came to Woy Jenkins. His autobiography, *A Life at the Centre* (Macmillan, £20), was actually the second most popular choice of the year, cited nine times — but it was ignored by both David Owen and Michael Foot. Choosing instead a life of Bob Boothby, poor old Worzel said hopefully: "Sometimes the lesser lights, properly displayed, can illuminate the political scene better than the blazing assurance of their leaders as presented by biographers and autobiographers" — yes, and sometimes they can just fizzle out, can't they?

Easily the most popular choice, rather ridiculously, was Nicholson Baker's charming little essay about his obsession with John Updike, *U & I* (Granta, £12.99). This was followed by Woy's memwoirs, and *Wise Children*, the novel by Angela Carter (Chatto, £13.99), with most of her supporters expressing a friendly wish that she had won a prize. Immediately behind came John Richardson's *A Life of Picasso Vol 1* (Cape, £25), and the biography of *Darwin* by Adrian Desmond and James Moore (Michael Joseph, £20). The latter "brings the hot historiography of science to the life of this sweet-natured *rentier*, and inserts him authoritatively into the violent class conflict and religious disputes of his time," said that authoritative inserter, John Ryle, hotly, in the *Sindie*. Helen Zahavi that it was "as if Oscar Wilde had written Death Wish"; Ian Thomson said of Iain Sinclair's *Downriver*, "he writes like Dickens on lysergic acid"; and Frederick Raphael said of *Hitler and Stalin*, it "just shows what Plutarch could have done if he had had a word-processor". A thin year, indeed.

After that came William Trevor's *Two Lives* and Milan Kundera's *Immortality* (Faber, £14.99); then Alan Bullock's *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (HarperCollins, £20) and Michael Holroyd's third volume of bloody Shaw (Chatto, £21). After that, after *that*, came the life of Lawrence by John Worthen, of Goethe by Nicholas Boyle (chosen by Hardy Amies in the *Daily Telegraph* because Goethe "wore English clothes"), and of Gerard Manley Hopkins by Robert Bernard Martin. Also mentioned: *The Kindness of Women* by J G Ballard, *Time's Arrow* by Sima Nitram, and the memoirs of Auberon Waugh and John Osborne.

Only three tipsters contended for this year's daft analogy medal. Julie Burchill said of *Dirty Weekend* by

UNSOLICITED CARTOON FROM RUSHTON



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ **YET ANOTHER middle-agie has found a new berth: Geoff "Buck" Mulligan, inveigled from Picador by Fatty Cheetham to Vintage only then to be purged by the man who hired him, has joined Octopus as editor of the Minerva list. Little wonder, with the carousel of "B" format paperback editors whirling round that the lists are increasingly identical. A Vintage is a Picador is a Minerva is a Paladin is a Flamingo...**

Meanwhile, Simon King, new managing director of Hutchinson, was, refuseniks assure Bookworm, not the third but the fifth executive to be offered the job. The other four decided sensibly to remain in their present jobs. Simon, of course, didn't have one.

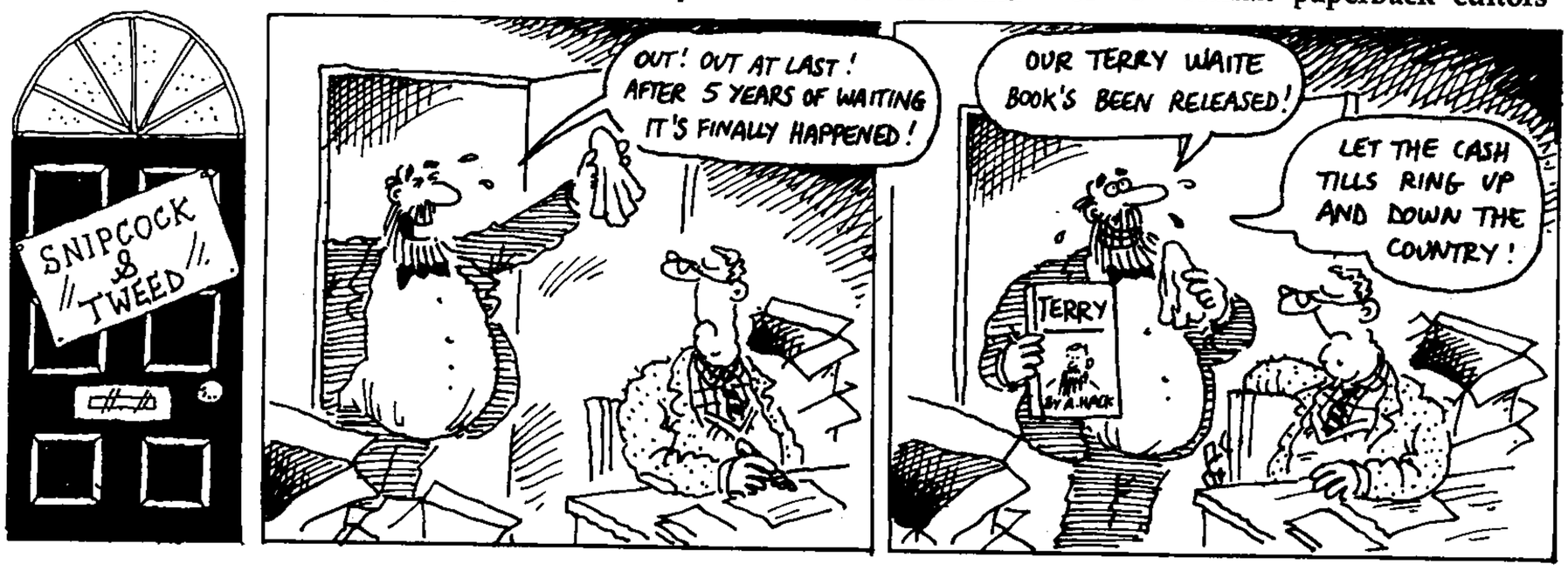
Surely someone will now offer a job to the Vicar, the Reverend Richard Cohen. He alone of senior publishers removed in the last year or so remains homeless. He cannot direct the Cheltenham Festival for ever, and has almost completed his magnum opus on the rapier for his agent, Sir Michael Sissons.

□ ANTHONY CHEETHAM'S financial genius, Peter Roche, has now handed in his cards at Random Century. No doubt he will join Fatty (henceforth to be known as Skinny) and Rosie in their new outfit. The Cheethams are eternally grateful to Roche for having made it possible for everybody concerned with the beginnings of Century subsequently to become millionaires.

■ *HARPERCOLLINS took a black, tombstone-like double column in the Bookseller to make an* IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT. *This revealed that they have redesigned the covers of Night Watch and Death Train — and not because the artwork was hideous. The author is the mysterious Alastair MacNeill who, whoever he is, is not Alistair Maclean, whose name dominated the covers of the previous editions of the two novels.*

□ TO CELEBRATE the European Court of Human [Peter] Rights' ruling that the Government's ban on newspapers publishing extracts from *Spycatcher* after the book was published everywhere but in the UK was a breach of human rights, Heinemann Australia has quietly slipped out a second book by the cork-hatted Wright. *The Spycatcher's Encyclopedia of Espionage* will not, despite the European Court's ruling, be published by Heinemann UK. Those eager to discover which distinguished living academic Wright discloses as a Soviet agent will have to order their copy, to be dispatched under plain cover, from Sandy Grant, Octopus Publishing Group (Australia) Pty, 22 Salmon Street, Port Melbourne, Victoria 3207, Oz.

'Bookworm'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Water

Money on tap

NOWHERE is the failure of the privatisation of Britain's utilities to enhance free market efficiency and competition more evident than in the water industry.

Not only is water still a monopoly — you buy what comes out of the tap or die of thirst — but the Government is even helping the industry to argue that more of its takings should go to its shareholders and less to make the expensive improvements needed to the quality of drinking water.

The battle is between the water companies and the Office of Water Services, OFWAT, which argues that the industry should devote more money to its investment programme and less on fat rates of return. Ian Byatt, OFWAT director, says that as there is little risk for investors in "buying" water, their returns are too high. They should be brought down to 5-6 percent from the 7-8 percent allowed when water was privatised. He suggests the companies should be allowed to borrow more and that dividend growth should be held down to 2 percent instead of the previously suggested 4 percent until 1995, and should thereafter drop to zero percent.

The cries of horror from the water companies have been heart-rending. They may take OFWAT to court on the grounds that its proposals overturn the original promises made to their investors in the glossy prospectuses; while OFWAT is threatening to report the companies to the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies Commission.

It was the Treasury that insisted on 8 percent returns because it thought anything less would be unattractive to speculators. Until privatisation, 5 percent had been considered adequate for nationalised industries.

PS: The Government, lest we forget, is being pursued through the courts by the European Commission after Friends of the Earth complained that the nitrates in drinking water for 5.3 million people exceeded European levels. Reducing nitrates to acceptable levels will cost £70 million in East Anglia alone, FoE says.

PPS: The nuclear industry has been gazing longingly at the low returns to water shareholders proposed by OFWAT. It has always argued that when the Treasury decided nuclear power was too expensive it based its calculations on too high a rate of return. It the nukes were allowed to use the lower OFWAT figure, they could even make out a case for more nuclear power stations. If only the industry could also make out a case that nuclear power is as safe as water...

Electricity

NATIONAL POWER
POWERGEN

Gas-fired central cheating

ONE OF the big justifications for electricity privatisation — that outsiders would rush in with cheap gas turbines to compete with generators National Power and PowerGen — is collapsing.

A leading newcomer, Deeside Power Development, planned to build a medium-sized (500 megawatt) station in Shotton, North Wales. Last week, it admitted defeat. It cannot obtain gas because of the Government's protectionist policies and so has sold out... to National Power.

The gas shortage can be traced to the Government's desire to burn all the UK's gas before it admits large amounts from overseas. National Power won't say where it is getting its supplies, but has been negotiating with Statoil of Norway for nearly two years. The newcomers who thought they would take on the giants are finding there is no gas to buy.

One independent generator said: "There is only a limited amount of gas available and there are 20 independents out there looking for supplies. National Power have a whole department doing nothing but look for gas and when British Gas suddenly closed the books they were organised to find supplies elsewhere."

Jonathan Sterne, the gas expert at Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, commented: "The Government are doing two contradictory things. They want to encourage independent power producers and competition, but they are tremendously worried about the import of gas and always have been. It is not logical but they don't know how to resolve the contradiction."

The result is a huge cock-up: the theory of privatisation was that if investors competed to buy shares, that would bring the benefits of competition to the public. Instead, it has brought the benefits of monopoly to the private suppliers.

NHS privatisation

QA—more questions than answers

HEALTH CHIEFS in the West Midlands may have acted illegally when they privatised the Regional Health Authority's computer department (see *Eye* 780).

Readers will recall that QA Business Services, the private firm set up by a management buyout two years ago, crashed in September with the loss of more than 70 jobs. But it has now been revealed by the influential *Health Service Journal* that the health authority's lawyer — Ian Paterson — advised his bosses that the privatisation was illegal.

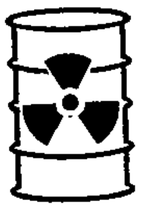
He claimed in a letter to the authority's general manager Ken Bales and to the Department of Health that the authority had no power to sell off bits of its operation in a commercial transaction. Mr Paterson said the move required a statutory order in Parliament from the Health Secretary.

Bales told the Birmingham media that Paterson's advice had been overruled by a QC who gave the privatisation the go-ahead. But further research has revealed that when the health authority met the barrister Paterson was not allowed to be present.

And sources at the RHA at the time of the sell-off claim the QC was not even asked about the specific points Paterson raised — only about the authority's responsibilities under company law. It has also been alleged that documents drawn up when the sell-off happened referred to the RHA's right to sell-off land and not a business.

Because of Paterson's reluctance to become involved, the sale was handled for the regional health authority by Birmingham solicitors, Eversheds. A spokeswoman for the RHA said no authority was needed to sell the computer division because it was not a core health activity. Paterson — an expert in NHS law — has always disputed this.

Now NUPE and Nalgo — whose members lost jobs when QA folded — are looking at the possibility of suing the health authority for compensation. Paterson, who's a member of Nalgo, was forced to take early retirement from the West Midlands RHA earlier this year after a row with Mel Nock — the authority director who masterminded negotiations over the QA sale.



Radioactive waste

Woolwich is a real dump

AS NIREX prepares to do battle with those opposing its plan to build a national nuclear waste repository at Sellafield, disturbing signs have emerged that the UK already has a radioactive waste dump — in London SE18.

Back in the summer Woolwich residents were alarmed to see workmen clad in protective overalls and respirator face masks digging up soil outside the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' building at the south end of Repository Road. The men appeared to be placing their excavations in sinister-looking black drums, which did nothing to alleviate local apprehension.

John Large, a nuclear expert who by chance lives in the Gate House at the bottom of Repository Road, wrote to the Ministry of Defence to ask what was going on. He received a reply from one S.M. Clark, a senior health physicist in the Defence Radiological Protection Service at Alverstoke. Clark said small amounts of radium, arising from past dial-illuminising operations (for gunsights) in the REME building, had escaped into the surrounding drains. "These are being removed and replaced," Clark wrote.

This transpired to be standard MoD economy with the truth. The civilian contractor, Wastechem, stopped digging up the ground but continued to survey the site. The results were alarming, as Chris Lloyd, an inspector with HM Inspectorate of Pollution (HMIP), told Large in a letter of 23 October. Lloyd said the survey had "identified a large volume of soil contaminated with radioactive waste" at the rear of the REME building.

The volume in question is at least 1,000 cubic metres, with an average radioactivity of 23 becquerels/cubic centimetre — more than 50 times the level at which decontamination must take place. The removal of this contamination will involve the sifting of 3,000 cubic metres of soil — an operation Lloyd said could not proceed without HMIP authorization as it would present a health risk to the surrounding area.

Such a quantity of radioactive material clearly did not get there by accident, but the MoD shows no sign of coming clean. Since 23 October it has instructed its press office to say the survey is still in progress. A spokesman commented that it was "too early to say what volume of waste there is" and added that there was "no indication of stuff being deliberately buried". A later letter to Mr Large did, however, acknowledge "that there was a burning or burial area" in the location.

The obstruction may well arise from a reluctance to admit that the buried material is much more dangerous than radium. Documents in the Public Records Office reveal that the old Atomic Weapons Research Establishment in Ha Ha Road, about 100 metres to the south, and the Woolwich Laboratories, an outstation of the Atomic Energy Authority's Harwell lab located in the Woolwich Arsenal by the river, generated at least three far more sinister forms of radioactive waste in the late 1950s.

The Blue Danube (bomb detector) research would have produced waste contaminated with tritium, beryllium and possibly plutonium. The filters from the chimneys of the Windscale reactors that caught fire in 1957 were also brought to Woolwich for analysis. These would certainly have been contaminated with plutonium. The final, and most macabre, source was tests carried out on the corpses of adults and children — even abortions were used — to assess the impact of strontium 90 (a principal constituent of the fall-out from a nuclear explosion) on human bone marrow. Their remains are unlikely to rest in peace.

In the City

THOSE readers of the quality Sundays' financial pages who divide their loyalties by buying more than one newspaper continue to be surprised by the regularity with which the same story in almost identical terms features in two or more of these supposed deadly rivals. This, despite the disingenuous discussions about "hidden persuaders" after the leaking of Lord Hanson's memo-whipping of his mouthpiece, "Sir" Tim Bell.

The answer of course lies in the still growing and disturbing unseen influence of financial PR firms, who have an increasingly firm lock on senior journalists on most if not all the Sundays. This influence is used to peddle favourable stories for a client, plant hostile stories for a client's opponent and pursue damage limitation where necessary.

The financial paid-to-lie-and-puff brigade are aided in their task by two factors: the increased number of business pages which need to be filled; and the emergence of a generation of financial journalists who have grown up spoon fed on handouts. Large salaries can now be earned without any of the supposed journalistic effort being expended chasing down real stories provided by unpaid informants. Instead it is just a case of awaiting the phone call and the friendly tip or package of incriminating documents on a bid rival from a paid mouthpiece whose actions can always be denied by the client — as happens every time there is a Stock Exchange inquiry into "leaks". Naturally, everything can be presented, without attribution, as your own work.

This dangerous development whereby lazy journalists are manipulated into backing one side or another or promoting some self-proclaimed City *Wunderkind* without any real independent check has developed far beyond the old Friday night drop in which announcements due Monday or Tuesday to the Stock Exchange were made first to the Sundays. It has become much more persuasive and pernicious, as post-Bell memo developments show only too clearly to those other than the beneficiaries.

While it is not unusual to find the same item planted in two of the four quality Sundays, to score a full house is rare indeed. But that is what happened with the saga of Williams Holdings' managing director and his disappearing dustbin bags on 17 November.

The *Sunday Times* ("Williams uncovers dirty tricks"), *Sunday Telegraph* ("Rudd, spies and bin bags"), *Observer* ("The bungled bid for the bin bags") and the not so *Independent on Sunday* ("Private detectives fail in bid to rubbish Williams") all featured the story which clearly owed much more to Williams's PR men Dewe Rogerson than to the five journalists whose bylines appeared.

It is not unusual for newspapers to fall over the same story, but usually there is a variance in facts or at least words. Not here.

The *Sunday Times* revealed that "nine days ago... two men were spotted loading rubbish bags into a Ford Sierra parked outside Roger Carr's Leicestershire home". The *Sindie* added that they were "smartly dressed". The *Observer* helpfully gave the registration number.

Let the *Telegraph* now pick up the story. "They were challenged by a builder working next door. They said they were authorised to collect the rubbish." Explanations echoed to the letter in the three other versions.

Over to the *Sindie*: "The police were called. They traced the car to a rental company at Heathrow." Why the builder was required to inform Carr when so many hacks were watching is not explained.

Now for the *Observer*: "They [the Leicestershire police not the engathered hacks] identified one of the gentlemen who had hired the car as Michael Felner, an employee of a US concern entitled Investigative Group Incorporated." Identifications shared with the readers of the rival Sundays.

IGI, all four then chorused, was retained by Goldman Sachs, advisers to Racal for whom Williams are bidding.

And the punch line? Well, not surprisingly there was not much of a choice. "The rubbish was not Carr's but debris from the building work next door" (*Sunday Times*). "The bags, which the men eventually left behind, did not belong to Carr but to the house next door" (*Sunday Telegraph*). "They came from the house next door" (*Sindie*). "The two sacks he helped to pick up came not from Mr Carr's residence but from the house next door" (*Observer*).

Brunswick, who act for Racal, did not have a good press that Sunday, but they certainly had a result with ICI where they got so far up the nose of the predatory peer Lord Hanson that he felt forced to bleat to Thatcher favourite Bell about his inability to counter the stream of anti-Hanson stories. Clearly Hanson realises where the power in today's financial press all too often lies. Unfortunately for him, Lowe Bell's lock is on the *Sunday Times* and *Sunday Telegraph* which, as Hanson made clear, he felt he already had in his pocket.

What Hanson may well have suspected — quite correctly in most but not all cases — is that the damaging "revelations" about certain Hanson secrets, such as Lord White's £10 million horse racing perk and the deft Hanson tax avoidance arrangements first disclosed by the *Evening Standard* and *The Times*, owed little to individual journalistic inquiry. They had been investigated (possibly by IGI/Goldmans who act for ICI), packaged and made available to those hand picked to run with them.

It would be interesting for example to hear how well certain journalists who wrote so knowledgeably about the Hanson tax arrangements would expound on just how the schemes — some of which were discussed in the *Eye* years ago — worked and exactly what taxes they were designed to avoid. Other Hanson "revelations" came from the same stable.

More recently it has been the turn of those advising Hawker Siddeley (Goldmans again, for one) in its doomed effort to see off BTR who got into muckraking by proxy. Information critical of business dealings by BTR chief executive Alan Jackson in Australia were shopped around and surprise, surprise finally found a home in the *Sindie* on 10 November. Doubtless considerable *Independent* investigative effort was expended in Australia checking the facts before the exposé was published.

Similarly it was presumably entirely coincidental that the *Sunday Times* and *Sunday Telegraph* on 1 December were both firmly of the view that Lasmo (a Brunswick client) was to raise its bid for Ultramar. The other two Sundays were less certain, but still indicated this as a likely development.

Does all this matter? Is it not all on the side of spreading the good or bad word? The problem is that, like Pavlov's dogs, journalists once trained to feed from the same hand tend never to bite. They lose any sense of judgement, without which they become little more than handout publishers. That is how such PR creations as Asil Nadir, John Gunn, George Walker, John Ashcroft and many other victims of recession inspired reality got away with it for so long.

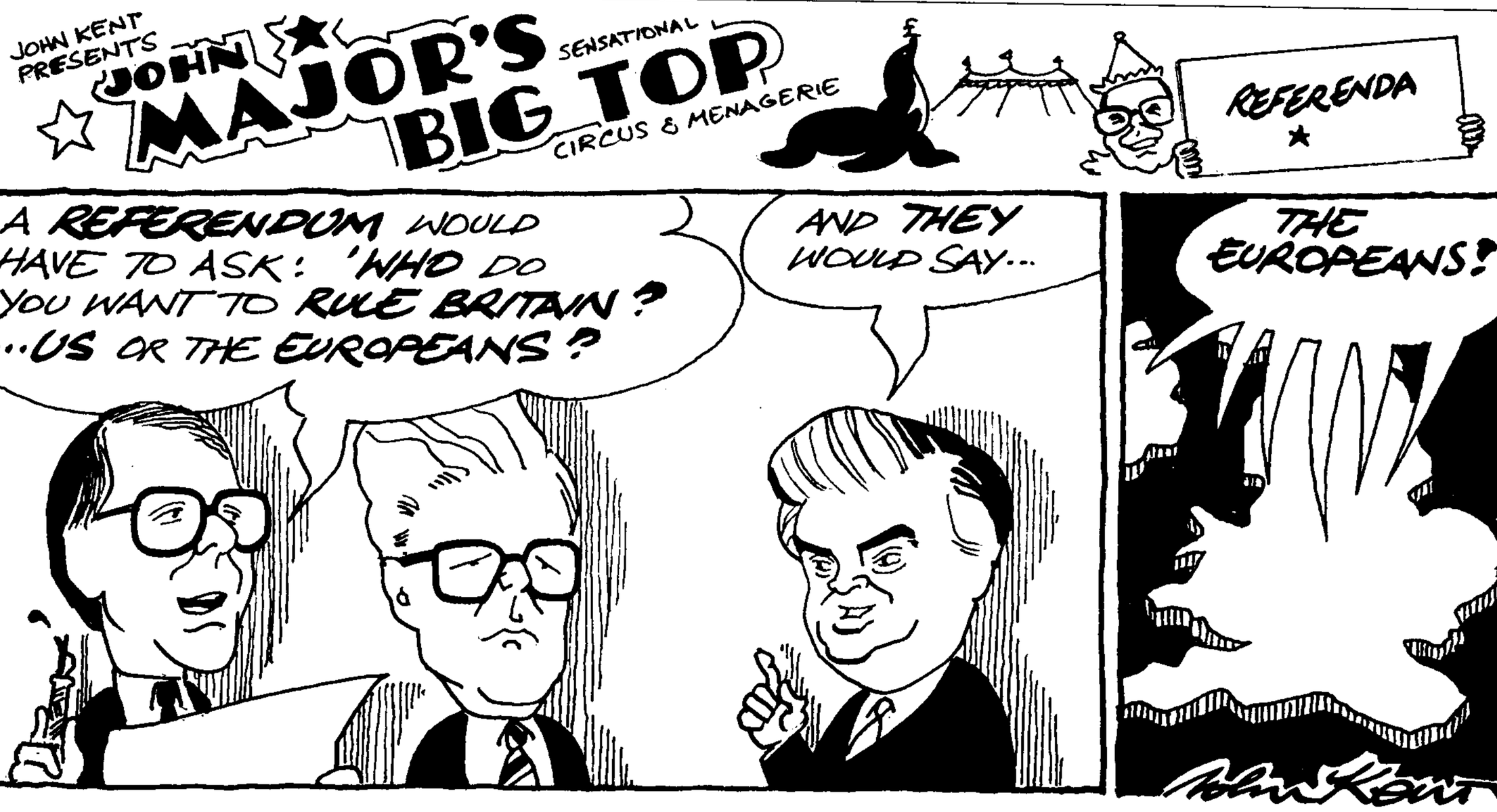
The insidious, corrosive impact of the financial PR mouthpieces is as dangerous to newspapers' objectivity as the exactly similar but more openly perceived and deprecated Downing Street and Foreign Office lobby/briefing systems.

There is precious little real investigation of major targets by financial journalists. Relying on the "puff" merchants for investigations carried out by others may overcome the obstacle of cost and possibly, but not certainly, libel. But it hardly encourages the survival of DIY investigations or that newspapers will let the chips fall where they may when it comes to exposing a favourite PR man's client.

DEVELOPMENTS are soon expected at Danbury, the small Essex property company which for many months has been a deal waiting to happen.

As indicated here previously, former Goldsmith lawyer Eric Levine has been manoeuvring in the background. Now it seems he may be about to move nearer centre stage. A deal is under discussion which could see one-time Slater/Goldsmith property protegé Michael Rivkin, last heard of in Argyle Securities before it was consumed by Goldsmith, emerge as a Danbury player. What that means for ex-Marler Estates winner Robert Noonan remains to be seen.

'Slicker'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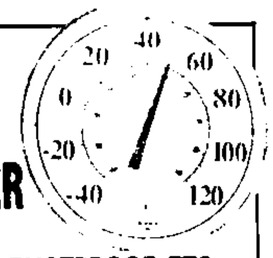

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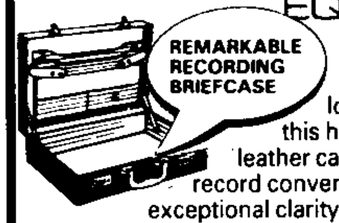

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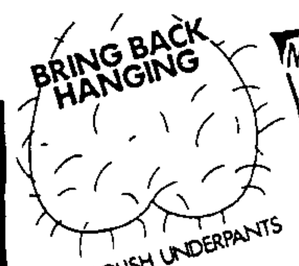

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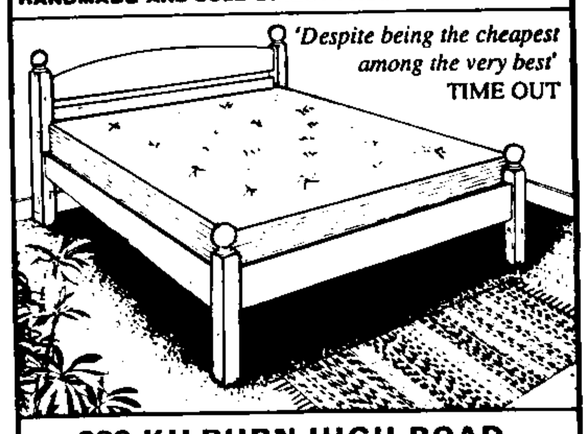

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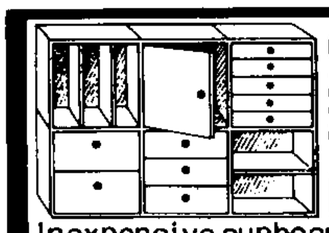

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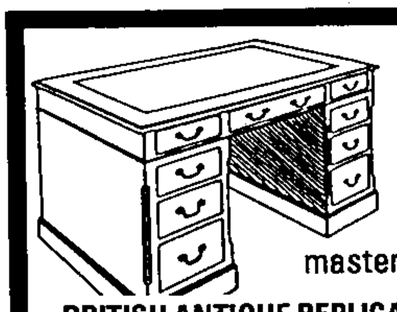

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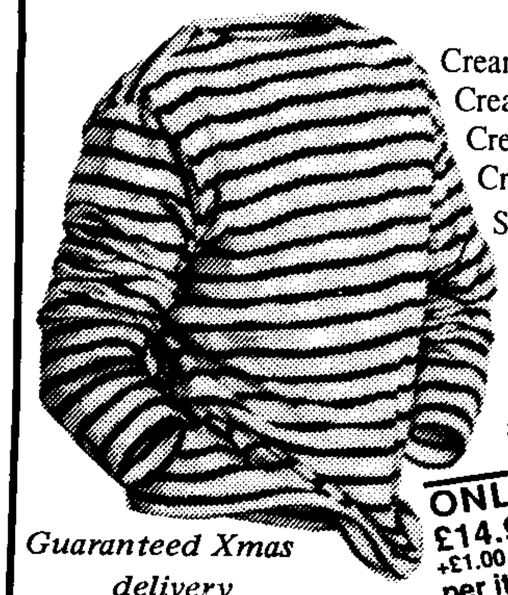

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1. Eat less fat – more fibre
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Why garlic?

We now know that it is important for the health of the heart that we maintain our blood fats and cholesterol at the correct levels.

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Nature's little joke

The best garlic for you (but not for your breath) is raw garlic. It provides a substance called allicin which has important benefits but is also very smelly. You can't have one without the other.

Unfortunately garlic oil products use boiled garlic and contain little or no allicin. So what can you do?

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Kwai guarantees a high amount of natural allicin producing substances in every little easily swallowed tablet of concentrated garlic.

The richest source of allicin is organically grown Chinese garlic. Kwai always selects the highest grade, whole Chinese garlic cloves from the same fertile province. Then they are carefully dried in a special process which just takes out water and nothing else. So Kwai is the nearest thing to raw, fresh garlic; in a convenient tablet form. Unlike garlic oil capsules, Kwai contains no gelatine and no vegetable oil.

£6 million heart research

Like you, Kwai cares about your health and has so far invested over £6 million in research studies to confirm what has been suspected for centuries – that garlic could help keep the heart healthy. No other company has. Kwai is unique.

Three times a day

Research has shown that it's best to spread your intake of garlic across the day. Taking it once a day, even a large amount, seems in some important ways to lose its effectiveness after a short time. And not taking Kwai's concentrated garlic all at once, helps to make sure it doesn't make you smell.

So just take two tablets with each meal and stay fragrant.

Try the Kwai kiss test.

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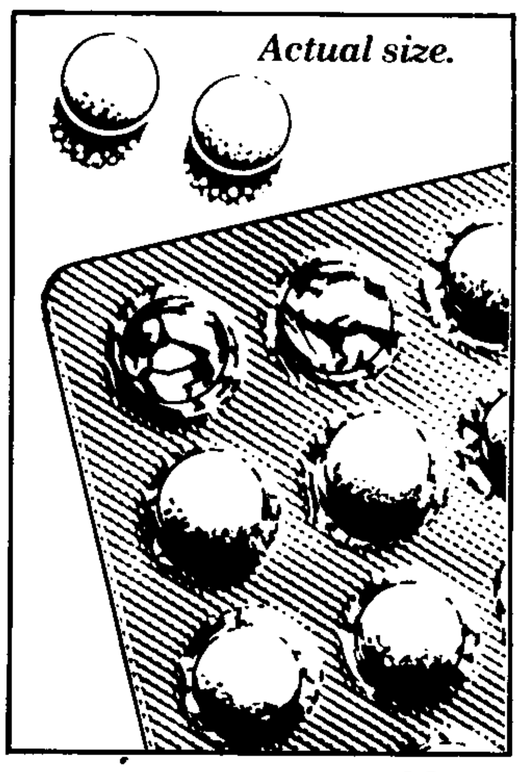
Kwai is now Europe's No.1 non-prescription health brand and over 1 million people use it every day. Kwai is the ideal way to take garlic which could help maintain a healthy heart and circulation. That's why nine out of ten people who try Kwai, stay with Kwai.

Kwai is available throughout Great Britain from Boots, chemists, Superdrug, Holland and Barrett and other health food outlets.

Try KWAI free

For your free trial pack, just send a stamped addressed envelope (min. size 8½ x 4 inches) to Kwai, Dept. P E 4 9 P.O. Box No. 21, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1YS.



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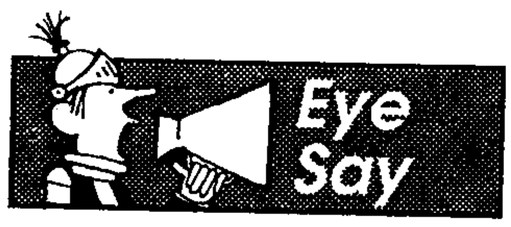

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CLUE 6A: The police believed that a few of the acknowledged Ripper murders were committed by a disturbed Copy-Cat killer who tried to emulate the Ripper. At this stage Sutcliffe the Copy-Cat had already been eliminated, four times. "The Real Yorkshire Ripper Revealed", £5.00, NOEL O'GARA, Ballinahowen, Athlone, Ireland.

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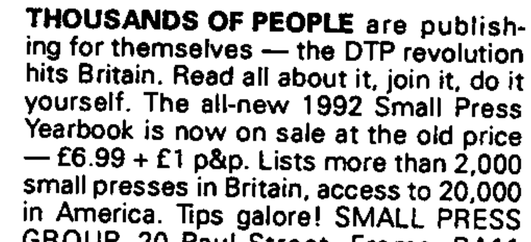
The Observer



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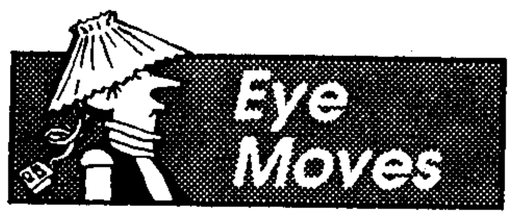

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ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL lady seeks man to father child. Involvement optional. Photos exchanged. Genuine replies please. Box 8982.

BLOODY INTELLIGENT Jewish N/O male, 34, attractive, witty, will tame naughty, attractive younger female and provide cultural stimulation. Photo please. Box 9082.

ATTRACTIVE, MARRIED man, 42, 6ft, own hair, public school, professional, seeks caring, long term occasional relationship with stunningly attractive woman, 22-38, London. Box 9182.

CHARMING LIVERPUDLIAN rogue, professional, seeks articulate, well-read, attractive Hibernian lass (23-28) for crack and laughter. Box 9282.

JOURNALIST, 30, tall, attractive, humorous, highly intelligent, seeks similarly attractive and intelligent professional female, lawyer, accountant, etc. Varied interests, including literature, politics, sport and wandering around old galleries. North West/W. Yorks or anywhere. Box 9382.

FEMALE TEACHER required, steam engine, 19. Box 9582.

SHY, LONELY, divorced bloke, 38, seeks lasting relationship with woman. Not much money but plenty of love to share. Photo appreciated. West Kent/East Sussex. Box 9682.

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REDHEADED LADY, 22-30, sought by keen redhead-lover, Cambs, 33. Photo and long(ish) letter would be nice! Box 3882.

HE, 41, ECO-FRIENDLY, gregarious, likes conversation, travel, food, walking, film, real pubs and more. Seeks she for fun and sharing. Age, children, pets, immaterial. Wiltshire. Photo please. Box 3982.

WIDOW, 40S, seeks tall, professional man, 50s for fun and friendship, walking and arts. London/anywhere. Box 4082.

PASSIONATE, literature enthusiast, male, nice-looking, slim, seeks buxom, bookish lady to discuss current film script, poetry, music, painting, cinema over champagne dinners. Box 4182.

VERY ATTRACTIVE, slim, young-looking, gentle, professional lady, 34, seeks sincere, loving, humorous man. Photo essential. Box 4282.

BEAUTIFUL, ATTACHED man, seeks similar woman for discreet liaisons. Box 4382.

LOVELY LONDON lady, 40, blonde, slim, needs to be cared for by affectionate professional gentleman, 40-50. Photo appreciated. Box 4482.

BARBARA PYM seeks words from Philip Larkin. Box 7282.

FORTHRIGHT, OLDISH fogey with all faculties functioning well, seeks to end sabbatical from sexes' conflict and find some female stubbornness for a mutual sharpening of minds and occasional soft moments. Box 8382.

LOVELY FEMALE, 54, husband terminally ill, seeks long friendship with affluent, reserved gentleman, 54-90. Box 8482.

MALE, 26, 5'10", fit-looking, intelligent, humorous, seeks caring, plump lady. London/anywhere. Box 8582.

KINKY NYMPHO wanted for Christmas. Offers? Box 7682.

ACADEMIC, 40, healthy, humorous, likes culture, sports, travel, adventure, decadence, seeks compatible woman, 25-35, East Midlands. Photo please. Box 7782.

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CELIBATE MALE, 34, seeks lady to broaden his horizons. Will travel. Box 7982.

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HANDSOME, LONDON bachelor, 30, 5'11", rugby playing graduate, needs gorgeous brunette. Box 2682.

FUN-LOVING FARMER, scuba diver, 51, yearns for frisky female with initiative and lively interest in getting on top of her job, also farming with voluptuous agnostic in Celtic fringes who's alive to writings of Ladas/Whipple/Perry/Barbach. Sincere replies sought. Box 7980.

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LAWYER, MARRIED, 40, slim, brown hair, reasonably handsome seeks affair with intelligent, warm, married lady. Photo please. London/Essex. Box 5982.

SOLVENT, PROFESSIONAL British male, 35, seeks solvent, Hong Kong bride. Details and photo please. Box 1982.

FEMALE JOURNALIST, 40, with looks, brains and flaws, seeks intellectual man (fellow hack?) with interest in politics and human rights. Box 2082.

GENTLEMAN FARMER, 34, seeks lady for relaxed evenings out, country walks. Photo appreciated. Shropshire lad but will travel. Box 2182.

SHY, SENSITIVE male, 23, seeks understanding older woman for friendship. Photo appreciated. Box 2282.

ECCENTRIC RECLUSE has returned from deepest, darkest Africa. Is there civilisation out there? Do you want to see my elephant impression? Box 3082.

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BLUE EYED SOUP dragon seeks attractive "clangerette", 20-30 for keeps. North West. Box 2882.

VIVRE "LERV"! Heard one about sweet and sour French graduate, 23, slightly romantique, needing witty, lively female, N/S, 20-35, for laughs, l'amour? You send punchline, me warmth. Glos/anywhere. Box 2982.

TALL, HANDSOME, sporty designer, 25, caring, honest, SOH seeks attractive female, 18-30 with lovely slim figure for romance and adventure and passion. Photo, address essential and nationality. Box 5582.

ELIGIBLE BACHELOR, 26, goodlooking, likeable, seeks smart and funny lady, 20-40, Belfast area. Box 5682.

GIN AND TONIC seeks single malt for hangover free relationship, mid 40's plus. Edinburgh. Box 6082.

INDEPENDENT, professional, Oxford woman, young 41, seeks sensitive, intelligent, sincere man. Box 6182.

TWO HONEST, witty, intelligent, attractive, broke, 20s girls seek like guys, preferably loaded for good laugh, etc. Bournemouth. Box 6282.

TWO WILDLY captivating, bright, funny and pretty damn attractive Jewish girls (praying nobody they know reads this ad) would love to hear from two witty dashing men, 28-38 to join them for pre-Christmas drinks. Box 6382.

NW LAWYER male, fit, 38, unattached, seeks attractive, female companion, 25-35, for going out and staying in. Photo appreciated. Box 6482.

FUNGI LOVING, professional lady, 36, very attractive, great fun, seeks rare specimen of "fun guy", solvent, bright, sociable, with whom to enjoy pleasant forays. Photo appreciated. Box 6582.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 37, N.W. London, educated, witty, financially secure, seeks attractive, intelligent girl, 25-30(ish). Photo returned. Box 6682.

QUIET, SHY, professional male, forties, wishes rebuild sexual confidence. Seeks kind, helpful lady for warm cosy daytime meetings. ALA. Box 6782.

PhD, FEMALE, 44, needs highly intelligent, kind, humorous, Leftish, N/S male (40s), London. Detailed reply ensures mine. Box 6882.

TALL, FAIR, balding, sexagenarian widower, bored with no social life in Kentish stockbroker belt needs a voluptuous, lusty, petite and elegant beauty to put the lead back in my pencil, etcetera. There must be life in the old dog yet. Kent, Surrey, London — or even Essex! Box 6982.

38, LONELY offshore worker seeks wealthy, attractive woman, 30-50, for discreet long-lasting relationship. ALA. Photo essential. Box 3382.

42, MALE, SEEKS wealthy, beautiful, 25-40, princess for discreet, sexciting meetings. ALA. Photo essential. Box 3482.

ARE YOU BORED? Interesting entrepreneur (37) seeks intelligent, vivacious female for discreet, exciting, lascivious affair, hotels, travel, etc. Photo and letter please. N. Yorks. Durham/anywhere. Box 3582.

M40 MALE, 23, seeks young lady for letters, laughs and misty November days. Box 4582.

SLIM, STYLISH (usually) female, 29, seeking kind (London-based) professional (forever) address? Box 4682.

ATTRACTIVE, LOVING lady, 34, quite a high-flyer in need of fun-loving, intelligent male to make life sparkle. (London SW). Box 4782.

MARK, DARK, tall, (6'3") and handsome (27). 5'8" London brunettes will get dinner. Forget the photo, come for a laugh. I've got mates if you want to bring yours. No accountants please! Box 3282.

SINGLE GUY, 30, TDH, seeks PYT for TLC and laughs. Photo appreciated. Box 3682.

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An Eye Love Reader

ARE THERE ANY single men left in Wales? I'm 32, slim, attractive, intelligent, professional and beginning to despair. Box 4982.

LUNCH IN PARIS. (home for tea!) for best letter from attractive lady of character. All replies acknowledged. Box 5082.

HANDSOME CITY broker, 32, 6'5", just back from worldwide tour, seeks very attractive girl for fun and open top motoring. Are you naughty but nice? Box 5182.

ONE-OFF, good humoured, single, handsomely statuesque Yank teddy-bear classical male musician (39) seeks a prospective Mrs Bach to experience fugues with forever. You are 25-40, European (preferably Scandinavian), without issue, well read, sensual and exquisite in every way. Photo/letter/phone/ASAP. Happy Holidays! Box 5482.

Eye Soldier On

UNCONVENTIONAL, non-riding cavalry officer, 28, seeks intelligent, challenging outdoor girl to be my best friend. Laughter guaranteed. Box 5782.

ACTIVE EX-ARMY officer, 65, 6'1", seeks extremely discreet liaison with elegant, slim lady, 40-65, for lust's sake. Very practised lover. Humorous, kind, libidinous. London. S.E. Photo please. Box 1882.

ARMY OFFICER (28), handsome, blonde, tanned and bored stuck in Caribbean but back in four months. Letters, photos, postcards please from young sexy girls (London and South East) who want to get together when I get back. Box 9482.

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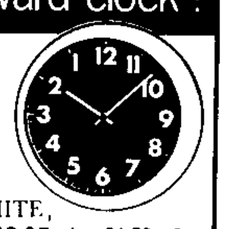

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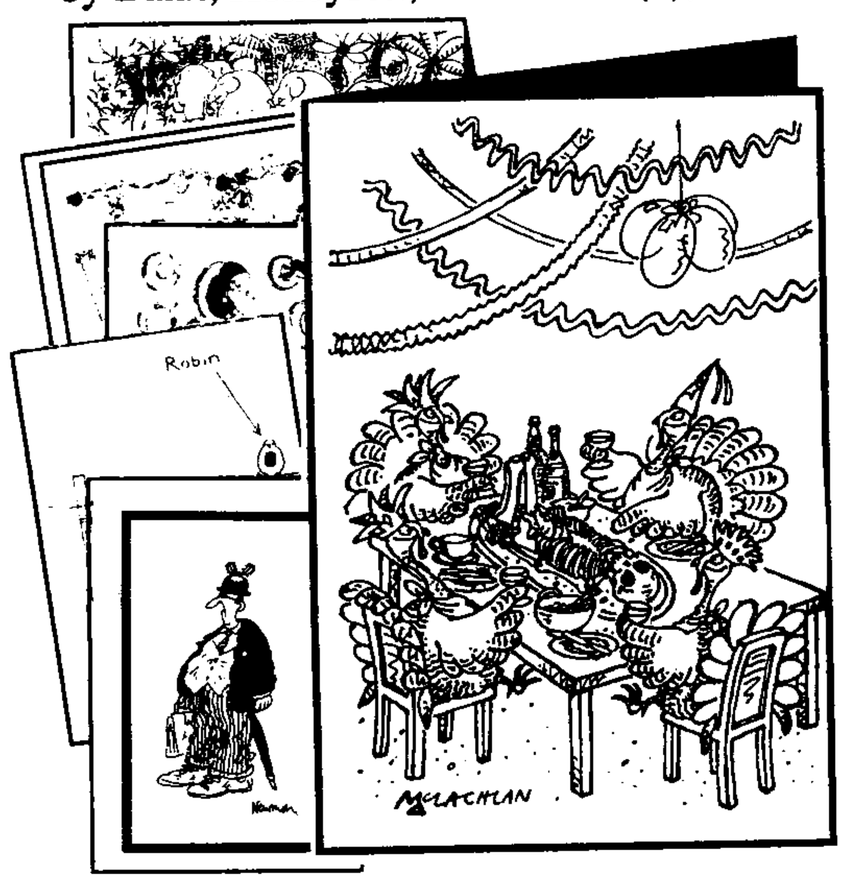

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